DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 336 795 CS 507 589

TITLE Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (74th, Boston, Massachusetts, August 7-10, 1991). Part X: United States Coverage of International News.

INSTITUTION Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

PUB DATE Aug 91

NOTE 459p.; For other sections of these proceedings, see CS 507 580-596.

PUB TYPE Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC19 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Agenda Setting; Comparative Analysis; *Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Mass Media Role; Media Research; *News Reporting; *Photojournalism; Sex Differences; Terrorism

IDENTIFIERS Gulf War; *International News; Journalism Research; Journalists; *Media Coverage; News Sources; Newsweek; Television News; Text Factors

ABSTRACT

The United States Coverage of International News section of the proceedings contains the following 15 papers: "TV News and U.S. Public Opinion about Foreign Countries: The Impact of Exposure and Attention" (Holli A. Semetko and others); "The World of U.S. Network Television News: Eighteen Years of Foreign News Coverage" (William J. Gonzenbach and others); "Eye on Soweto: A Study of Factors in News Photo Use" (Sue O'Brien); "The Influence of Text and Graphics in Increasing Understanding of the Context of Foreign News" (Jeffrey L. Griffin and Robert L. Stevenson); "Enduring Image of War: Analysis of a 'Newsweek' Cover" (Jack Lule); "Determinants of International News Reporting in the U.S." (Ali N. Mohamed); "The Agenda-Setting Effects of International News Coverage: An Examination of Differing News Frames" (Wayne Wanta and others); "Western and Third World Readers' Interest in Negative News" (Anju Grover Chaudhary); "Content, Geography, and Source Consonance among the U.S. Networks in Foreign News Coverage" (Jyotika Ramaprasad); "Comparative Analysis of Reporters by Gender on CNN World Report" (Mercedes K. Morris Garcia); "U.S. Newsmagazines Cover the Ethiopian Famine, 1983-86" (Andrea Gary and Anne Cooper); "Press Support for the U.S. Administration during Periods of External Conflict: A Test of Three Theories" (Sonia Gutierrez-Villalobos and others); "Desert Storm and the Tundra Telegraph: Information Diffusion in a Media-Poor Environment" (Larry Pearson); "News Media in the Persian Gulf War: Increased Use and Learning Effects" (Zhongdang Pan and others); and "The Agenda-Setting Effects of Terrorism" (John W. Williams). (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED336795

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 1991 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION (74th, Boston, MA, August 7-10, 1991).

Part X: United States Coverage of International News.

CS507587

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Ferrell
Ervin

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TV News and U.S. Public Opinion About Foreign Countries:
The Impact of Exposure and Attention

Holli A. Semetko and Joanne Bay Brzinski
University of Michigan

David Weaver and Lars Willnat
Indiana University

Presented at an International Communication Division panel, at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication (AEJMC) Boston, August 1991.

Holli Semetko is assistant professor of communication and adjunct assistant professor of political science at the University of Michigan, and also a faculty associate at the Center for Political Studies, Institute for Social Research. Joanne Bay Brzinski is a doctoral student in political science at Michigan. David Weaver is Roy W. Howard Professor of Journalism & Mass Communication Research at Indiana University, where Lars Willnat is a doctoral student in mass communication.

TV News and U.S. Public Opinion About Foreign Countries: The Impact of Exposure and Attention

For most Americans, the mass media are the only, or at least the predominant, source of information about foreign countries and world events. Personal contact via travel abroad remains the privilege of a minority. The media, and television in particular, make foreign countries, leaders, and events visible and familiar to a U.S. audience. By making the unfamiliar familiar, the media have great potential to influence U.S. public opinion about foreign countries (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987).

Foreign affairs news, however, does not normally account for a large proportion of U.S. news coverage. The amount of foreign affairs news ebbs and flows with crises and world events (Graber, 1989). In general, there is less foreign affairs news in the U.S. media than in many other countries. For example, foreign news coverage in U.S. press was far less prevalent than in Europe in the 1960s and this probably also holds true today (Hart, 1966). The wire services (AP and UPI) in fact provide many more foreign news items than are used by the majority of small to medium-sized newspapers in the U.S. (Wilhoit and Weaver, 1983). And, of those items carried in the U.S. press, the majority about events in "more developed" parts of the world, including the USSR and Europe, are about conflict (ibid). Moreover, some research suggests that elite newspapers and international and national wire services set the foreign news agenda for U.S. networks (Larson, 1979).

Despite the importance of the media as a source of information about world events, however, there has been relatively little empirical research on the impact of foreign affairs news on U.S. public opinion about foreign countries. The present study goes some way toward filling this gap. This paper concerns the potential for news media coverage of foreign affairs to influence public opinion about foreign countries during the latter part of 1989 and early 1990, a time of dramatic changes in central Europe. This study draws on two sources of data: content analysis of U.S. network news and wire service coverage of nine countries (West Germany, East Germany, the Soviet Union, Hungary, Poland, Great Britain, France, Japan and Israel) over a six month period, and a national representative survey of U.S. public opinion about foreign affairs which measured opinions about these countries, conducted in early 1990. Two related questions are addressed here:

1. What is the relationship between visibility (the amount of news coverage) of a foreign country in the U.S. news media and public opinion about that country?

2. Does this relationship vary by medium (television versus newspapers)? In other words, are television and newspapers equally important vehicles for influencing U.S. public opinion about foreign countries?

Three general points emerge from a review of the literature relevant to addressing these questions. The first concerns the nature of the medium. Television is a particularly important source of foreign affairs news. It has increased the size of the audience for foreign affairs news, making for a potentially larger and more demographically representative attentive public than in previous decades (cf. Almond, 1960; Cohen, 1973). According to Graber (1989:329): "Without television most people would have skipped (foreign affairs) news if they encountered it in newspapers." The significance of television is particularly evident in the case of a crisis, when television anchors often report live or from the scene. In recent years they have even on occasion become "mediators" for diplomatic messages (Larson, 1986).

But high exposure does not mean that television viewers actually learn something. Research on what people learn from foreign affairs news on television suggests that despite high levels of exposure, knowledge remains at a relatively low level (Graber, 1988; Sahin, David and Robinson, 1982). This is explained in part by low interest.

Television is a medium of visual images. Some previous research does suggest that TV news coverage is likely to have more impact than print coverage on public opinions, as opposed to public awareness or knowledge (Drew and Weaver, 1990). TV news may also have a greater influence on general affective evaluations of countries than print coverage. But it is not clear from prior research how important television or newspaper coverage of foreign affairs is relative to other factors -- such as personal contact with foreigners via travel, one's educational background, or political interest -- in influencing public opinion about various countries.

A second point concerns the difference between exposure to news coverage and attention to news coverage. A number of studies distinguish between exposure and attention to news, and emphasize the value of attention measures in explaining media effects. Attention to television and newspaper news is a stronger predictor of effects such as opinion formation than is mere exposure to such news (Drew and Weaver, 1990; Chaffee and Schleuder, 1986; McLeod and McDonald, 1985). This suggests that attention to news may also be a more important predictor of opinions about foreign countries than exposure.

Finally, research measuring associations between media use and opinions about foreign countries has yielded mixed findings concerning the direction of opinions (favorable or unfavorable). Media exposure is more often associated with relatively favorable feelings toward other countries generally, whatever their region or ideological orientation (Reilly, 1979), and with relatively positive images of all countries (Chaffee and Miyo, 1983), than with negative attitudes (Korzenny et al., 1987). If there is a relationship between the visibility of a foreign country in the news and public opinion about that country, then it would seem likely that the direction of opinion would reflect the predominant tone of the coverage. One study of TV news and public opinion about the Arab-Israeli conflict in the 1970s and

1980s in fact found a positive relationship, at the aggregate level, between the image of the countries in the news and direction of public opinion about the countries (Adams and Heyl, 1981).

Three general expectations for this study emerge from this review of the literature:

1. Television news coverage of foreign countries will exert a greater influence on public opinion about those countries than newspaper coverage.
2. Attention to foreign affairs news will be a stronger predictor of opinions about foreign countries than exposure to news.
3. The visibilty of a country in the U.S. news media will be positively associated with the strength of media measures in predicting opinions about that country; the direction of opinions may reflect the general tone of coverage.

METHODS

The content analysis was designed to assesss the visibility of nine foreign countries in the U.S. news media over the six month period before the national survey of U.S. public opinion went into the field. The content analysis consisted of a count of news stories about the nine foreign countries on network news and on the UPI wire, from the beginning of September 1989 through the end of February 1990. The Vanderbilt Television News Index was used to count the number of relevant foreign news stories on the three networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC. The names of the nine countries were used as the key words for the index. NEXIS was used to count the number of foreign news stories on the UPI wire. The results of the content analysis are reported in the first section of this paper.

The U.S. survey was conducted by telephone, from March 1-18, 1990, among a randomly selected sample of 1117 adults of voting age (18 years or older) around the continental United States, excluding Alaska and Hawaii. The survey was carried out at the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor, and it is representative of the adult population in the U.S. The U.S. survey is part of a broader cross-national comparative project concerning media influence on public opinion about foreign affairs. 1

This analysis focuses on the influence of television and the press, in comparison with other variables such as personal contact, general political interest and key demographic characteristics, in predicting opinions about each of the nine countries. The main dependent variable used in this analysis is the country ratings. Respondents were asked to rate each of the nine countries on an 11 point like-dislike scale ranging from +5 to -5. The question was: "Now we would like to ask you how much you like or dislike certain countries. Using a scale going from the highest position of +5, for a country which you like very much, to the lowest position of -5 for a country you do not like very much, please tell me what you think about the following countries. How would you rate (Hungary)?" 2 A randomization function was used on the CATI system to eliminate the possibilty of bias due to country order.

The independent variables include measures of media exposure and attentiveness, personal contact, political interest, and age, education and gender. Respondents were asked: "How many days in the past week did you watch national network news on television such as ABC with Peter Jennings, CBS with Dan Rather, NBC with Tom Brokaw, or CNN?" and "How many days in the past week did you read a daily newspaper?" These two questions represent the exposure to television and exposure to press measures used here. Those who reported watching a national TV network news program or reading a newspaper were asked follow-up questions: "How much attention did you pay to television news (newspaper articles) about foreign affairs - a great deal, a lot, some, a little, or none?" These two questions represent the attention measures used in this analysis.

Apart from exposure to news and attention to news about foreign affairs, personal contact is another potentially important basis for evaluating a foreign country. Respondents were therefore asked whether or not they had ever been to Europe. Political interest may also help to explain opinions about foreign countries, with the politically interested also being more attentive and more informed. Respondents were asked: "In general, how interested are you in politics? Are you very interested, somewhat interested, not very interested, or not at all interested?" Age, the level of education and gender have also been associated with interest in foreign affairs, and were therefore also included as independent variables in this analysis (Almond, 1960). The second section of this paper compares the value of these independent variables in predicting opinions about the nine countries.

The survey also included a number of other questions about specific events and issues pertaining to U.S.-German relations, as well as a number of additional measures of contact with West and East Germany. The fieldwork was conducted in the period leading up to the first free elections in East Germany held on March 18, 1990. This was a period of great uncertainty about the course of developments in Germany. There was no clear consensus among political elites in early 1990 on how long East Germany would remain a separate state and very few would have predicted that German unification would occur only six months later, in October 1990. The third section of this paper assesses the importance of U.S. media relative to other variables in influencing opinions about East and West Germany.

RESULTS

Media Coverage of Foreign Affairs in 1989-90

The dramatic political developments in Eastern Europe, and particularly in Germany, were the subject of a great deal of U.S. media coverage during the latter half of 1989 and early 1990. This was an exceptional period in terms of world events. Figure 1 shows a striking increase in the number of TV news stories about East Germany, coinciding with sweeping political reforms in East Germany and the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989. During September and October 1989, TV coverage about East Germany concentrated mainly on the growing number of refugees fleeing to West Germany through Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary. Then, in November and December 1989, the coverage shifted to the political changes in the East German government and the growing number of demonstrations in major East German cities.

This increase in coverage occurred not only for East Germany, but also for West Germany and Poland, boosting the total number of network TV news stories about the nine countries from 125 in September 1989 to 235 in November 1989. The fact that West Germany and Poland were closely connected to the political transformation of East Germany during 1989 partly explains the increased number of TV news stories about both countries. During the last three months of 1989, West Germany and Poland had to deal with the political implications of a crumbling East German regime and the flood of East German refugees.

Whereas coverage of most of the nine countries declined after November, the number of TV news stories about the Soviet Union continued to increase steadily through February. Throughout the six month period, coverage of the Soviet Union was dominated by conflict. The main focus was on ethnic conflict between Armenians and Azerbaijanis over the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, as well as the center-periphery conflicts involving the independence movements in the Baltic Republics Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Andrei Sakharov's death and the Armenian earthquake in December 1989 generated additional attention to the Soviet Union. In early 1990, television coverage of the Soviet Union increased again due to President Gorbachev's proposal to end the Communist party's monopoly on political power and his attempts to crush the growing ethnic violence in Armenia with military force. Political unrest spreading to Tadzhikistan and Uzbekistan as well as the parliamentary elections in Lithuania also led to the increase in television coverage of the Soviet Union.

Foreign affairs news on U.S. network television was thus dominated by images of two countries in the six month period under study: the Soviet Union and East Germany. West Germany and Poland were the two other countries most heavily covered by network TV news. Those least covered were France, Japan and Great Britain. Israel and Hungary ranked in the middle.

The country covered least in the news is not included in the graph in Figures 1 and 2 because the chart program would not accommodate more than eight countries. Thus Japan, the least covered country on television, does not appear in the graph in Figure 1 and West Germany, the least covered country on UPI does not appear in the graph in Figure 2.

Figure 1 About Here

Figure 2 depicts the pattern of United Press International news stories about the nine countries. The wire service supplies much of the foreign news coverage for many U.S. newspapers. Those countries covered most heavily in the UPI wire were the Soviet Union, Japan, East Germany, and Israel. Those covered least were West Germany, Hungary, and France. Poland and Great Britain ranked in the middle. Overall, there were nearly three times as many stories about the various countries on the UPI wire as on network television, with much more news on the wire about France, Japan, and Great Britain. Thus the total pattern of coverage of the UPI wire differed noticeably from that of the TV networks, with only two countries (the Soviet Union and East Germany) among those most covered by both UPI and the TV networks, and with only one country (France) in the group of least covered countries by both the wire and TV.

Figure 2 About Here

These patterns of coverage on both network TV and the UPI wire service suggest two modifications should be made to the expectations about the effects of visibility and media attention discussed earlier:

(1) Attention to TV news about foreign affairs will have its greatest effects on public opinion about the most visible countries -- the Soviet Union, East Germany, West Germany and

Poland -- and its smallest effects on opinions regarding the least visible -- France, Japan and Great Britain.

(2) Attention to newspaper coverage of foreign affairs will have its greatest effects on public opinion about the most visible countries on the wires -- the Soviet Union, Japan, East Germany and Israel -- and its smallest effects on opinions about the least visible -- West Germany, Hungary, and France.

Exposure and Attention to Foreign Affairs News

The level of exposure to television news and newspapers is relatively high in the U.S. In March 1990, 33% watched TV news and 18% read a newspaper at least three or four times a week, in addition to the 26% who watched TV news six or seven days a week compared with 44% who read a newspaper almost daily. In sum then, 59% view TV network news and 62% read a newspaper three or more days per week. Of those who watched TV news or read newspapers, 23% paid "a great deal" or "a lot" of attention to foreign affairs news in the press and 35% said the same about TV news. Thus attention to foreign news was reported to be high for more TV news viewers than newspaper readers.

Certain demographic groups are more interested in foreign affairs news. More men than women, more older people than younger people, and more college graduates than high school graduates are highly attentive to television news about foreign affairs. They reported paying "a great deal" or "a lot" of attention to news about foreign affairs in the press or on television. Although the difference between the sexes diminishes as the level of education increases, it nevertheless remains significant. Those with higher income levels are also more attentive, although this difference becomes insignificant when controlling for education. Contact with Europeans, or having visited or lived in Europe, is also positively associated with higher levels of attentiveness, as is political interest.

Nevertheless, it appears that an event as profoundly important as the downing of the Berlin Wall can trigger attentiveness among those who are not normally attentive to foreign affairs news. For example, a full 62% reported paying "a great deal" or "a lot" of attention to news coverage about the Berlin Wall coming down compared with 35% who claimed to pay "a great deal" or "a lot" of attention to foreign affairs news on television and 23% to newspaper coverage about foreign affairs. Indeed, nearly as many women (62%) as men (64%) were attentive to news about the Berlin Wall coming down, compared with 29% of women and 41% of men who are highly attentive to foreign news on television generally. And among those with the lowest levels of education (high school diploma or less), 53% were highly attentive to news about the Wall, compared with 24% who claimed to be highly attentive to foreign affairs news on television. Large numbers of those in the youngest age group (under 24), who were less attentive to general foreign affairs news than any other age group, were nevertheless attentive to news about the Wall. Nearly 50% of people under 24 were highly attentive to news about the Wall coming down, compared with 25% who claimed to be highly attentive to foreign news generally.

The U.S. survey began with the open-ended question, "Looking back over the past year, in your opinion what was the most important event in the news?" followed by, "And what was the second most important event in the news?" The Berlin Wall was the most common response. Taking both questions together, 35% of respondents spontaneously mentioned the Berlin Wall, 4% mentioned changes in East Germany, and 1% mentioned German unification. All together therefore, nearly 40% of respondents spontaneously mentioned events related to Germany as the most important events in the news.

Media Attention and Opinions About Foreign Countries

Does attention to media coverage about foreign affairs influence attitudes about foreign countries? How does this differ from exposure? Is television more important than newspapers in influencing public opinion about foreign countries?

Table 1 displays the overall mean rating for each country, based on a +5 to -5 scale, and the means by level of attention to television news about foreign affairs. For seven of the nine countries, the mean ratings for those in the two highest attention levels was significantly higher than those who paid little or no attention. Moreover, higher attention in most cases correlates significantly with positive country ratings. In almost every case, those who are highly attentive to media coverage about foreign affairs rate countries higher than those who pay little or no attention. The exceptions are Japan and France, whose ratings displayed almost no variance among media or key demographic groups. There was comparatively little news about both of these countries on the TV networks in the six month period leading up to the survey.

Table 1 about here

Ordinary least squares multiple regression analysis was then employed to determine whether television and newspaper attention would remain significant, in the context of a number of other potentially important variables. This analysis identifies the independent effects of demographic characteristics (age, gender and education), contact with Europe (via travel), interest in politics, and exposure and attention to television and newspaper coverage about foreign affairs on U.S. public opinions about the nine foreign countries. Two separate regression runs were done for each country, one with only the media exposure measures and one with only the media attention measures, because of high correlations between TV exposure and attention (.67) and newspaper exposure and attention (.63) that suggested possible multicollinearity problems. In cases where the non-media Betas or R^2s differed between the two equations, the higher figures are reported.

Table 2 About Here

This analysis shows that attention to foreign affairs news on television is generally the strongest and most consistent predictor of liking a country. The attention to television measure is a significant predictor of liking six out of nine countries. The Betas were strongest for those countries that received the heaviest coverage on television news during the six months prior to the survey (the Soviet Union, East Germany, West Germany, and Poland). Of those countries receiving the least coverage on TV news during this time (France, Japan, and Britain), only Britain can claim attention to TV news as a significant predictor of public opinion about the country, but this Beta of .10 is one of the weakest for the TV attention measure.

The number of days a person is exposed to TV news is also a significant predictor of opinions about a country, but in fewer cases (four out of nine countries) and in each case it is weaker than the attention measure. The fact that the exposure to television measure is significant only for the four countries that were most visible in network news nevertheless supports the expectation of a positive relationship between visibility and effects on public opinion.

But this pattern does not hold for newspaper coverage of foreign countries, assuming that frequency of coverage in the UPI wire service is a reasonable indicator of frequency of coverage in various U.S. newspapers. The results in Table 2 show that attention to foreign affairs news in newspapers weakly predicts opinions on only two countries -- West Germany and France -- two of the countries least frequently covered by the UPI wire service, and frequency of exposure to newspapers weakly predicts opinions about four countries that range from those most heavily covered (the Soviet Union) to one of those least covered (France). Thus there is no pattern linking newspaper exposure and attention to opinions about countries most frequently covered, as there is with television news, and the Betas for newspaper exposure and attention are much weaker than those for TV news.

Two general points emerge from this analysis and both are in line with the expectations discussed at the outset. One is that TV news coverage is more important than print coverage in shaping opinions about foreign countries. Secondly, attention to foreign affairs news on television is a more consistent and stronger predictor of these opinions than is mere exposure to TV news. In fact, the only other predictors that come close to TV attention in consistency and strength are age (with younger people more likely than older to say they like East Germany, the USSR, France and Japan) and political interest (with those more interested more likely to rate five of the nine countries positively). Contact, in the form of visiting Europe, is a significant predictor for only three of the nine countries (West Germany, Great Britain and the Soviet Union).

Media Attention and Opinions About Germany

What is known today as Germany was known as West and East Germany at the time of the U.S. survey. Although the Berlin Wall had come down, East Germany was still a socialist state with a Communist government, and a member of the Warsaw Pact. West Germany, by contrast, was a stable democracy, one of the strongest members of the European Economic Community, and a member of NATO.

Americans in general rated West Germany positively and highly in comparison with other countries. The mean rating for West Germany was 2.3, on an 11 point scale ranging from +5 to -5. The mean country ratings based on the entire sample of U.S. respondents, in rank order, were: Great Britain 2.9, Germany 2.3, France 2.1, Poland 1.6, Japan 1.5, East Germany 1.1, Hungary 1.0, Israel 0.9, Soviet Union, 0.6.

A number of questions in the U.S. survey pertained to contact with West Germany. If respondents had visited Europe, they were asked whether they had been to West Germany or Berlin, and whether they had visited West Germany or lived there for some time. All respondents were asked whether they have friends or relatives living in West Germany, and whether they have German ancestors or relatives. It is therefore possible to discuss in greater detail the relative importance of contact measures, media exposure and attention measures in influencing opinions about West and East Germany.

Among the U.S. respondents, 29% have visited Europe, and of these, 14% have visited or at one time lived in West Germany or Berlin. And 21% of U.S. respondents have friends or relatives living in West Germany. Finally, 37% claim to have German ancestors. But even if all these factors are taken into account, those who in one or another way have had contact with Germany remain a minority in the U.S. The mass media are therefore the most common source for people in the U.S. to learn something about Germany. And for those having no personal experience with Germany, attentiveness to foreign affairs news in early 1990 should exert an important influence on opinions about Germany. The analysis presented in the previous section dealt with only one measure of familiarity or personal contact - whether they had been to Europe. But does media attentiveness continue to exert an influence when other measures of contact or direct experience with Germany come into play?

The demographic measures (age, gender and education), contact measures (German ancestors, German friends or relatives, and visited to Europe), interest in politics, exposure to newspapers and TV network news, and attention to foreign affairs news in newspapers and on TV network news were entered in hierarchical regressions to predict liking-disliking of West and East Germany. The dependent variable in the first case was sympathy with West Germany, based on the 11 point scale ranging from -5 to +5. Five blocks of predictors were used because of multicollinearity problems with the media exposure and attention measures. These measures were entered in separate blocks to avoid distortions of regression coefficients due to their high intercorrelations. (See Tables 3 and 4 for more details.)

Hierarchical regression was used as a more rigorous test than simple multiple regression of the ability of media exposure and attention to predict opinions about West and East Germany. By entering all other predictors into the regression equations first, it is possible to see if the newspaper and TV exposure and attention measures predict additional variation in opinions not already explained by demographic factors, contact measures, and interest in politics.

Table 3 About Here

As Table 3 indicates, the attention measures -- higher levels of attention to foreign news on television and, to a lesser extent, in newspapers -- are significant predictors of liking West Germany, even after all other independent variables have been entered into the equation. But the exposure measures -- the number of days people watch TV network news and read newspapers -- are not significant predictors of public opinion about West Germany. The exposure measures do not increase the R^2 (proportion of variance explained) significantly, and the individual Betas are not significant.

Age, education and gender, the contact measures and political interest are also significant predictors of liking West Germany, but only gender (being male) remains a significant demographic predictor after the media exposure and attention measures are added to the equation. This may be because many more U.S. men than women have served in the armed forces in West Germany. The contact and political interest measures remain significant in all equations, suggesting that media coverage is not the only, or even the major, foundation for forming opinions about the country. Demographic characteristics and contact predict substantially more of the variation in opinions about West Germany than do political interest or the media attention measures.

Table 4 About Here

But the situation is quite different for opinions about East Germany, as Table 4 shows. It is clear from these results that attention to television news is the main basis for forming opinions about the country. Age remains the only other significant predictor, and political interest is no longer significant as is shown in Regression 5 in Table 4. Older respondents, more likely to have had life experience with the Second World War, are more likely than younger respondents to rate East Germany negatively. The contact measures are not significant, suggesting that Americans' greater familiarity with West Germany via travel, friends, relatives or ancestors does not influence opinion about East Germany. Attention to foreign affairs news on TV is slightly stronger than frequency of exposure to TV news as a predictor of liking East Germany, as can be seen from comparing Regressions 4 and 5. This finding is in line with the patterns for the other countries reported in the previous section, as well as in other studies comparing media exposure and attention measures (Drew and Weaver, 1990; Chaffee and Schleuder, 1986). But, overall, the proportion of variation explained in U.S. public opinion about East Germany is much less (4%) than for West Germany (16%), largely because of the absence of direct contact with East Germany and the little information available to Americans about that country.

DISCUSSION

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the dramatic developments in central Europe and the Soviet Union in late 1989 and early 1990 generated a remarkable amount of foreign news coverage in the U.S. media during this period. Television was a particularly important medium for relaying emotionally powerful images about these events. For nearly one week in November, 1989 the anchors of ABC, CBS and NBC network evening news programs reported live from Berlin, channeling reports from East Germany, the Soviet Union, and other former eastern bloc countries.

During this time of great changes in central Europe, attention to foreign affairs news was not limited to a small group of homogeneous devotees in the U.S., but rather applied to a varied cross-section of the public. In unusual times, television news reports can play an important role in the development of public opinions about foreign countries.

This study suggests that there is an important and significant relationship between the visibility of foreign countries in the U.S. news stream and U.S. public opinion about these countries. To the extent that the visibility and tone of coverage about foreign countries in the U.S. news media can be manipulated, this study suggests that U.S. public opinion is likely to be influenced (Manheim and Albritton, 1984).

Moreover, television news is the most important medium for influencing U.S. public opinion about foreign countries. Television news is a more important vehicle for influencing public opinion about foreign affairs than newspaper coverage.

This study also suggests that it is greater attention to foreign affairs news on television that best predicts general liking of a country, rather than simple frequency of exposure to television news or to newspapers. Even attention to foreign affairs news in newspapers did not emerge as a significant predictor of opinions about most countries, reinforcing the importance of television as a medium of visual images in shaping opinions, and the importance of measuring attention to a certain kind of news as well as simple frequency of exposure to different news media.

Another striking finding is that greater attention to TV foreign affairs news is consistently associated with more positive opinions of a country, suggesting that most U.S. TV news coverage of foreign countries reinforces the previous finding from psychology that the more familiar is usually evaluated more positively than that which is unknown (Zajonc, 1968). This pattern holds also for the few newspaper exposure and attention measures that are significant, except in the case of Israel, where more exposure to newspapers weakly predicted more dislike of Israel, possibly because of negative print coverage of Israeli treatment of Palestinians.

Future research will explore whether television is as important an influence on public opinion about foreign affairs in other countries. Perhaps television is particularly important in the U.S. because of the general lack of direct experience with foreign countries, the generally low level of knowledge about other nations, and the generally weak political culture. Germany, with its highly developed political culture in the west and the new and developing political culture in the east, is an interesting environment for such research (cf. Semetko, 1990).

Acknowledgements

The first author would like to thank the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for funding the U.S. survey. A Research Fellowship from the German Marshall Fund of the U.S. supported her work in Germany in 1990, during which time a first draft of this article was written. The helpful comments of Wolfgang G. Gibowski, Director of the German Press and Information Agency in Bonn, and Professor Ingwer Borg, Research Director at the Zentrum fuer Umfragen, Methoden und Analysen (ZUMA) in Mannheim, on an earlier version of the paper are much appreciated.

Notes

1. This work is supported by the German Friedrich Naumann Foundation. The "Two Nations Study" reports the preliminary results of comparable surveys in West Germany and the U.S. conducted in March 1990, comparing attitudes on U.S.-German relations. See Gibowski and Semetko, 1990 and (forthcoming).

2. If the respondent asked what was meant by like or dislike (in terms of the people, the government, the food etc.) the interviewer was instructed to say 'in general.' This general question has also been used in surveys conducted by the Chicago

Council on Foriegn Relations, with responses based on a thermometer ranging from 0 to 100. See Reilly, 1979 and 1987.

References

Adams, William C. [ed.] (1982) Television Coverage of Internatinal Affairs (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex).

Adams, William C. and Philip Heyl (1981) "From Ciaro to Kabul with the Networks 1972-1980" in William C. Adams [ed.] Televiison Coverage of the Middle East (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex).

Almond, Gabriel (1960) The American Public and Foreign Affairs (New York: Praeger).

Chaffee Steven H. and Yuko Miyo (1983) "Selective Exposure and the Reinforcement Hypothesis: An Intergenerational Panel Study of the 1980 Presidential Campaign" Communication Research 10, pp. 3-36.

Chaffee, Steven H. and Joan Schleuder (1986) 'Measurement and Effects of Attention to Media News," Human Communication Research 13, pp. 76-107.

Cohen, Bernard (1973) The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy (Boston: Little Brown & Co.).

Drew, Dan and David Weaver (1990) "Media Attention, Media Exposure, and Media Effects," Journalism Quarterly 67, in press.

Graber, Doris (1988) Processing the News: How People Tame the Information Tide (New York: Longman). 2nd Edition.

Graber, Doris (1989) Mass Media and the American Public (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press). 3rd Edition.

Gibowski, Wolfgang G. and Holli A. Semetko (forthcoming) "Amerikanische oeffentliche Meinung und deutsche Einheit" in Wolfgang-Uwe Friedrich (ed) The USA and the German Question: 1945-1990 (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag).

Gibowski, Wolfgang G. and Holli A. Semetko (1990) "The Two Nation Study". Report presented at the German Information Center, New York and Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, Washington D.C., April. (Washington, D.C.: Freidrich Naumann Foundation).

Hart, James (1966) "Foreign News in U.S. and English Daily Newspapers: A Comparison" Journalism Quarterly 43, pp. 443-449.

Iyengar, Shanto and Donald R. Kinder (1987) News That Matters: Television and American Opinion (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press).

Korzenny, Felipe Korzenny, Wanda del Toro and James Gaudino "International News Media Exposure, Knowledge and Attitudes" Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media 31 (1) pp. 73-87.

Larson, James F. (1979) "International Affairs Coverage on U.S. Network Television," Journal of Communication 29 (Spring) pp.

Larson, James F. (1986) "Television and U.S. Foreign Policy: The Case of the IRan Hostage Crisis," Journal of Communication 36 (Autumn) pp. 108-130.

Larson, James F. (1984) Television's Window on the World (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex).

Manheim, Jarol B. and Robert B. Albritton (1984) "Changing Natinal Images: International Public Relations and Media Agenda-Setting," American Political Science Review 78 (September): 641-657.

McLeod, Jack and Donald McDonald (1985) "Beyond Simple Exposure: Media Orientations and Their Impact on Political Processes," Communication Research 12, pp. 3-34.

Reilly, John [ed.] (1979) American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1979 (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations).

Reilly, John [ed.] (1987) *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1987* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations).

Sahin, Haluk Dennis K. Davis and John P. Robinson (1982) "Television as a Source of International News: What Gets Across and What Doesn't" in W.C. Adams [ed.] *Television Coverage of International Affairs* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex) pp. 229-244.

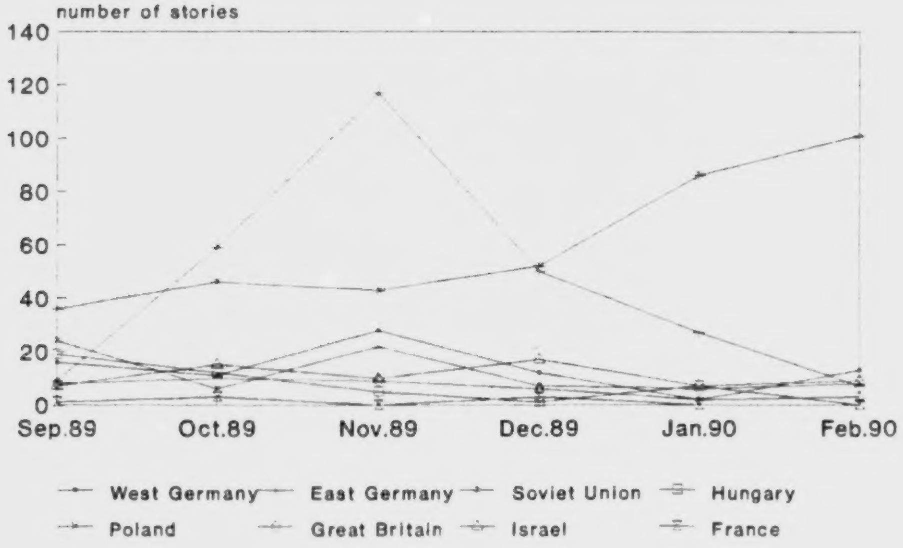
Semetko, Holli A. (1990) "Mass Media and Attitudes about Foreign Countries: The East German Case" Paper presented at VII International Conference on Value Change, Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, Prague.

Wilhoit G. Cleveland and David H. Weaver (1983) "Foreign News Coverage in Two U.S. Wire Services: An Update" *Journal of Communication* 33 (2), pp. 132-148.

Zajonc, Robert B. (1968) "Attitudinal Effects of Mere Exposure," *Journal of Social Psychology, Monograph Supplement* 9, pp. 1-27.

Figure 1

Number of Television News Stories About Each Country Per Month



Source: Vanderbilt Telev. News Archive

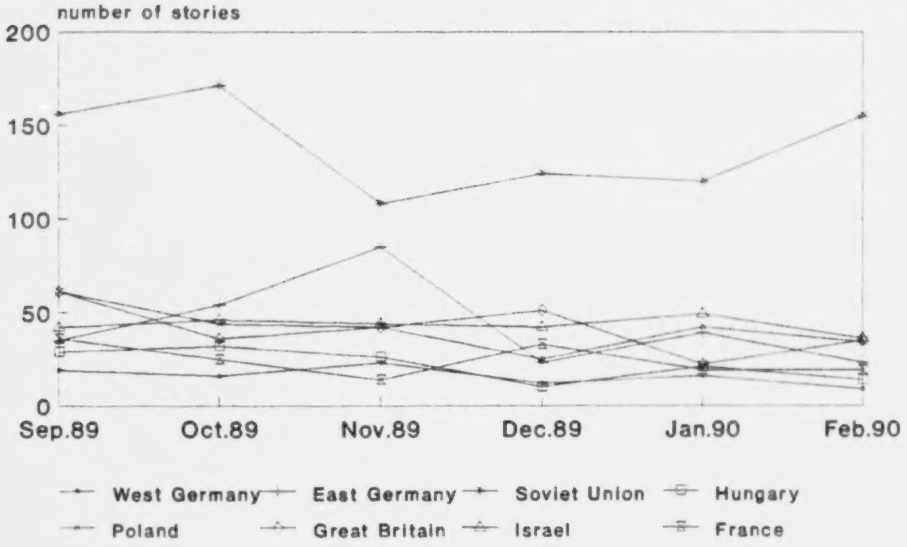
Number of Television News Stories About Each Country
(per month: September 1989 - February 1990).

Country	Sep.89	Oct.89	Nov.89	Dec.89	Jan.90	Feb.90	Row Total
WGermany	16	11	28	12	2	13	82
EGermany	9	59	117	50	27	7	269
Soviet Union	36	46	43	52	86	101	364
Hungary	19	12	5	1	7	-	44
Poland	24	6	22	7	6	8	73
Great Britain	8	10	9	6	2	3	38
Israel	7	15	10	17	7	9	65
Japan	5	6	1	5	7	7	21
France	1	3	-	3	-	-	7
	125	168	235	153	144	148	973

Source: Vanderbilt Television News Archive

Figure 2

Number of UPI-Wire News Stories About Each Country Per Month



Source: Nexis

Number of UPI-Wire News Stories About Each Country
(per month: September 1989 - February 1990).

Country	Sep.89	Oct.89	Nov.89	Dec.89	Jan.90	Feb.90	Row Total
WGermany	19	16	23	12	16	9	95
EGermany	35	54	85	23	39	23	259
Soviet Union	156	171	108	124	120	155	834
Hungary	29	32	26	10	21	14	132
Poland	61	44	42	25	42	34	248
Great Britain	61	36	42	51	22	35	247
Israel	42	46	44	42	49	36	259
Japan	102	101	87	75	74	80	519
France	36	25	14	33	19	19	146
Column Total	541	525	471	395	402	405	2.739

Source: NEXIS (only stories that mentioned the country in the headline or heading)

Table 1

Mean Attitudes Toward Other Countries
By Varying Levels of Attention to Foreign Affairs
News on Television
(on 11 point scale ranging from -5 to +5)

Level of Attention to Foreign Affairs News on Television	W. Germany***	E. Germany**	Britain***	USSR***	Israel***	Poland***	France	Japan	Hungary***
A Great Deal	3.16	1.56	3.40	1.24	1.30	2.58	1.99	1.29	1.72
A Lot	2.86	1.49	3.42	1.44	1.53	2.14	2.03	1.65	1.22
Some	2.30	1.18	2.76	.76	.87	1.62	2.15	1.44	1.08
A Little	1.57	.42	2.37	-.08	.24	.71	1.58	1.55	.19
None at all	1.30	.83	2.23	-1.09	-.20	1.29	2.65	.66	.14
Sample Mean	2.44	1.19	2.95	.80	.96	1.78	2.02	1.44	1.06
ANOVA: *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001	N=887	N=878	N=886	N=889	N=883	N=880	N=880	N=887	N=862

Table 2
Significant Predictors of Attitudes Towards Countries (Betas)
Michigan Survey 1990

Variable	WGermany	EGermany	Britain	USSR	Israel	Poland	France	Japan	Hungary
Age	--	-.13***	--	--	.11**	.06*	-.14***	-.13***	--
Gender (male)	.13***	--	--	.11***	--	.13***	-.12***	--	--
Education	--	--	.13***	--	--	.07*	--	--	--
Pol. Interest	.13***	--	--	.08**	.18***	.09**	--	--	.13**
Visit Europe	.15***	--	.11**	.07*	--	--	--	--	--
TV Exposure	.07*	.11**	--	.13***	--	.10**	--	--	--
NP Exposure	--	--	.07*	.06*	-.07*	--	.07*	--	--
TV Attention	.13***	.13***	.10**	.15***	--	.16***	--	--	.09**
NP Attention	.08*	--	--	--	--	--	.08*	--	--
R Square	.11	.03	.06	.07	.05	.08	.04	.03	.03

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Note: TV and Newspaper Exposure measures were entered separately from TV and Newspaper Attention measures because of multicollinearity problems (TV Exposure is correlated .67 with TV Attention and Newspaper Exposure is correlated .63 with Newspaper Attention). In case of any difference in Betas for non-media predictors, the larger Beta is reported. There were very few differences between the two equations for media exposure and media attention measures. In case of any differences in R Squares, the higher figure is reported. The n's of these equations range from 1,015 to 1,018.

Table 3
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of
Sympathy Towards West Germany (Betas)
Michigan Survey 1990 (n=1060)

Predictor Variables	Regression 1	Regression 2	Regression 3	Regression 4	Regression 5
Age	.09**	.09**	.07**	.05	.04
Gender (male)	.18***	.16***	.15***	.14***	.14***
Education	.14***	.09**	.06	.06	.03
German Ancestors		.08**	.08**	.07**	.08**
German Friends/Relat.		.17***	.16***	.16***	.16***
Visited Europe		.13***	.13***	.12***	.11***
Political Interest			.15***	.13***	.09**
TV Exposure (Days)				-.04	--
NP Exposure (Days)				-.03	--
TV Attention				--	.11***
NP Attention				--	.08*
R Square	.06	.12	.14	.14	.16
R Square Change	.06	.06	.02	.003	.02
Sig. of Change	.0000	.0000	.0000	.1814	.0000

*<p.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

See Note at bottom of Table 2.

Table 4
Hierarchical Regression Analysis of
Sympathy Towards East Germany (Betas)
Michigan Survey 1990 (n=1054)

Predictor Variables	Regression 1	Regression 2	Regression 3	Regression 4	Regression 5
Age	-.08**	.08**	-.10**	-.13***	-.12***
Gender (male)	.04	.04	.03	.03	.02
Education	.01	-.01	-.03	-.04	-.05
German Ancestors		.04	.04	.04	.05
German Friends/Relat.		.06	.06	.05	.06
Visited Europe		.05	.05	.05	.04
Political Interest			.09**	.07*	.05
TV Exposure (Days)				.11**	--
NP Exposure (Days)				-.004	--
TV Attention				--	.14***
NP Attention				--	-.01
R Square	.01	.02	.03	.035	.043
R Square Change	.01	.01	.01	.005	.01
Sig. of Change	.0203	.0232	.0072	.0041	.0002

*<p.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

See Note at bottom of Table 2.

The World of U.S. Network Television News: Eighteen Years of Foreign News Coverage

William J. Gonzenbach
M. David Arant
Robert L. Stevenson

School of Journalism and Mass Communication
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
CB# 3365, Howell Hall
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3365
919/962-1204

Submitted to the International Communication Division,
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication,
meeting in Boston, MA, August 1991

The World of U.S. Network Television News: Eighteen Years of Foreign News Coverage

Introduction

How the Western media cover the world -- or ignore it -- and in particular how the uniquely influential U.S. media cover the world have been the focus of political and scholarly interest for nearly a half century. In the 1970s, the UNESCO New World Information Order debate led to a number of significant studies, which tended to support some -- but by no means all -- of the criticism. The debate also prompted self-examination among journalists and what appear to be improvements in the amount and quality of foreign coverage in the major news media.

Research interest in the topic waned in the latter years of the 1980s along with political interest in the issues that had sparked the debate in the first place. But what happened to world coverage during this time? Or more broadly, how -- if at all -- has television coverage of the world changed in the past two decades?

Most studies addressing aspects of the NWIO debate emphasized depth at the expense of breadth, that is, they tended to be intensive examinations over short periods of time. There are values to such studies, but an understanding of the forest can be lost by too close a study of a few trees. In this paper, we exchange depth for breadth in a content analysis of U.S. commercial TV network news coverage over 18 years, the period covered by the Vanderbilt University Television News Index and Abstracts.

The price for this wide-angle view of TV network news -- 10,000 stories from 1972 to 1989, the full period of the Vanderbilt project -- is loss of detail. However, the study does consider several key variables that are relevant to issues of foreign coverage in the 1990s as well as the 1970s and adds to our understanding of the medium the perspective of time.

Background

Because television became a primary source of news for many Americans in the 1950s and 1960s and is now the principal source of information for most Americans (Larson, 1984), researchers have tried to ascertain the amount and focus of international and foreign news provided by network newscasts. Recent budget cuts at network news operations and challenges to network dominance of news by Cable News Network and aggressive local stations may portend changes in the field of television news (Wallis and Baran, 1990).

Almaney's (1970) review of ABC, CBS and NBC newscasts in April 1969 revealed that national news, of course, received more attention than international (stories involving the United States and at least one other nation) and foreign (other nation or nations). Almaney found that coverage of international affairs was dominated by the Far East (52 percent of stories), but that Western Europe led the coverage of foreign affairs (7 percent of foreign stories). He found that TV news is a domestic news medium and covered international (21 percent of total stories) and foreign affairs (16 percent of total stories) only when they reach the "crisis" point.

Larson and Hardy's (1977) content analysis of 1972-1975 network newscasts utilized the Television News Index and Abstracts, which beginning in 1972 has provided short abstracts of evening news broadcasts of the three major networks. The researchers listed the mentions of nations in the newscasts and found that international stories (those with mention of foreign nations) made up 35 percent of the stories at NBC, 37 percent at CBS and 39 percent at ABC. They also found that developed nations were much more likely to be mentioned than developing nations.

Hester (1978) in his analysis of network newscasts in 1972-76 found that foreign news (news reported from outside the United States) made up 22 percent of the typical newscast and each story averaged about 87 seconds. Two out of every five foreign news stories dealt with military/defense, and news from Western Europe and Indo-China accounted for more than half of all foreign news on the newscasts.

Weaver et al. (1984) added their content analysis of 1977-1981 newscasts to Hester's data and showed that for the ten year period foreign news (defined as news reported from outside the United States or originating from the United Nations) made up 25 percent of the network newscast time. They found no significant increase in volume of foreign news on the evening newscasts of the three networks during the 10-year period. The geographic area receiving the greatest attention was the Far East from 1972-76 and the Middle East during the next five years.

Larson (1984) in his study of international news content of 1,000 television evening newscasts from 1972-1981 found that on the average newscast seven of 17 stories (nearly 40 percent) dealt with international affairs and accounted for seven minutes, 19 seconds, of the 22 minutes of news. The mean length of international stories was one minute, 28 seconds, for the period 1976-1981. Story format showed a 10-year trend of fewer anchor and more video reports by network correspondents for international stories. Larson also found that in foreign coverage crisis stories composed 27 percent of the foreign news and the typical newscast was likely to contain news items on the USSR, major U.S. allies in Western Europe, Japan or the Middle East, but much less likely to contain Latin American, sub-Saharan African and South Asian nations. Regional coverage showed that nations in Western European, the Middle Eastern and Asian nations were mentioned in 30 percent of sampled stories, Eastern European in 20 percent, Latin American in 11 percent and African in 7 percent. A relatively high portion of network coverage of Western Europe and the Middle East was in the form of foreign video reports, the result of direct visual news gathering by network correspondents. The networks relied heavily on news agencies for coverage of Africa and coverage was crisis centered.

Wallis and Baran (1990) considered the impact of technological, financial and political/legal factors on the 1980s. First, satellite technology enabled news broadcasters to get pictures and sound from remote places in hours or minutes. News services linked by satellite offered their video to affiliates and independent stations, breaking up the traditional dominance of the networks. In an environment of instantaneous satellite links, speed assumed priority over investigation. The cost of high tech contributed to the situation in which CBS News, a $28 million source of profit in 1979, became a $65 million loser by 1987. Financial pressures led to some foreign bureau cuts and greater reliance on news wholesalers, such as Visnews and WTN, for news gathering. Also, the competitive pressure did not lead to diversity among the three network newscasts. Wallis and Baran found that the networks deliver similar versions of the day's events.

Now we will update the analysis of network news of foreign and international news on ABC, CBS and NBC from 1972-1989 by examining the following research questions:

1) Has the amount of international and foreign news changed during the period;

2) Has the format of presentation, anchor versus correspondent reports, changed during the period;

3) Has the geographic focus of the reports changed during the period;

4) Have the topics of international and foreign reports changed during the period;

5) Are there differences among the networks concerning the amount, presentation, geographic focus and topic of international and foreign coverage;

6) Do the results change when the unit of analysis is changed from story frequency to time?

Method

Descriptive content analysis is sometimes difficult in that decisions about what variables to measure and what categories to use are often guided more by pragmatic concerns and conventions than theory (Stevenson et al., 1990, p. 197). However, recent cross-national comparative studies (Sreberny-Mohammadi, et al., 1985; Stevenson and Shaw, 1984; Larson, 1984) suggest a standard inventory of measures -- such as time, topic, geographic location -- that any descriptive study should include. We used these studies as a point of departure and modified them for the objective of this study.

Variables

The study comprised 10 variables. The first three simply measured the *day*, the *month* and the *year* of the story. The fourth was a classification of the *network* -- ABC, CBS, NBC. The fifth and sixth measured the *minutes* and *seconds* of the story. The seventh measured *story type*. This measure comprised three attributes: a report by the anchor (with or without film); an on-site report from a correspondent; and an "other" category for commentaries or in-studio interviews with expert sources. The eighth, *category*, addressed the mix of foreign and domestic news. Critics argue that Western media (or media in general) fail to pay adequate attention to the rest of the world. As Stevenson et. al. (1990) suggest, "The figure for international news coverage depends heavily on its definition because a great deal of news concerns relations between the home country and another "(p. 197). Rather than decide arbitrarily whether a story about the United States and another country was foreign if it took place abroad but domestic if it took place in the United States, we incorporated a three-category variable suggested by Stevenson et al.: domestic (involving only the United States); international (involving the United States and a foreign country, regardless of geographic location) and foreign (with no reference to the United States). The ninth variable, *geographic focus*, was based upon a geographic categorization of the world, as opposed to a cultural categorization. The variable basically followed the UNESCO/IAMCR study definition of geographic regions (Stevenson and Shaw, 1984) and comprised the following nine categories: United States Domestic, Canada, Latin America/Caribbean, Africa, Western Europe (including Greece and Turkey), Eastern

Europe (including the Soviet Union and Turkey), the Middle East (including Afghanistan and Iran), Asia/Pacific, and Global/Multi-Regional (stories with countries from two regions or dealing with global, multi-regional issues). The final variable, *topic*, was also based on the UNESCO/IAMCR study (Stevenson and Shaw, 1984) was the only variable that was difficult to code. We developed 20 categories: 1) international politics ; 2) domestic politics; 3) and military, defense and war ; 4) micro economics ; 5) macro economics; 6) international aid; 7) social services and conditions; 8) crime, law and justice; 9) culture/arts; 10) religion; 11) science/technology; 12) sports; 13) entertainment; 14) personality profiles; 15) human interest; 16) education; 17 ecology, environment and weather; 18) natural disasters and accidents; 19) terrorism, hijackings and violent protest; and 20) other.

Sample

The study was based upon network news coverage reported in the Vanderbilt Archives News Abstracts and comprises 18 years -- January 1972 through December 1989. A random sample of 41 days per year was taken, systematically controlling for quarter, for a total of 738 days for the 18 year period. Because the abstracts included each of the three networks for each of the days, the network was systematically rotated to ensure an equal distribution of network coverage. If a particular network coverage was not available for a day (as an example, no CBS coverage on Saturday or Sunday) we selected Friday if it was a Saturday and Monday if it was a Sunday). The unit of analysis for the study was the individual story within each newscast. The quarter data provided a unique perspective of network news coverage in that most of the other studies limit their analyses to annual coverage. The Abstracts were a sufficient source of information for all of the variables except topic, in which case the summary reports were sometimes rather oblique.

Coding

The coding was completed by 30 undergraduate journalism students from a major university in the southeastern United States. The students were given two training sessions prior to the coding, in which the group coded five sample days together. Then, after they coded the stories, sessions where held in which they could ask questions about particular coding issues with the authors of the study. The decision to use the large number of coders and the coding method was based upon the type of data that was collected, i.e., almost all of the variables could be coded with very minimal interpretation.

We used two measures of intercoder reliability, Scott's pi (Scott, 1955) and Holsti reliability test (Holsti, 1969). We based the tests on 6 of the 10 variables (minutes, seconds, type, category, geographic location and topic). We excluded the variables of day, month, year and network because the students had little difficulty coding these variables. Thus, their exclusion makes the tests significantly more conservative. The reliability measures were based on a sample of 3 percent of the nearly 10,000 stories. The Scott's pi was .903 (a standard acceptable level is .75) and the Holsti reliability measure was .92 (an acceptable level is .90).

Results

Trends over time. Figure 1 through Figure 4 show annual changes in network coverage from 1972 through 1989. On the whole, however, coverage has remained steady.

About 40% of network news deals either with other countries (what we have called foreign news) or with activities of the United States that involve other countries (international news). Findings were consistent with Larson's 1972-1981 study (1984) that showed a small, but steady, increase in foreign and international coverage in the late 1970s and coverage remained steady at about 40% through the 1980s. Whether these numbers are big or small depends on the point of comparison. They are small compared with news in some other countries, which, to be sure, are often comparable to

U.S. states, but represent a smaller part of the total news menu available to the public than in most countries.

Figures 1 - 4 about here

If the 12 minutes of foreign and international news on the average early evening network newscast seemed inadequate, one must remember that commercial television also includes breakfast television (with limited but probably broader international coverage), late night programming (which has a heavy global emphasis) and a diverse set of magazine and Sunday morning programs (which emphasize what the daily programs ignore). And, of course, most Americans have access to public TV and cable, which supply a dazzling diversity of information about the rest of the world.

However, the evening network has special status as a showcase of American TV, the largest audience and presumably the most influence. CNN's rise to prominence in the past year or two may change this assessment, but for now its audience is still much smaller than the combined audience of the three commercial networks. The evening network news is still the most important window on the world for most Americans.

Figure 2 shows the division of labor among the anchors, correspondents and the rare use of other sources, such as consultants. An increase in the use of correspondents in the mid-1970s continued through the 1980s and seems to be an immediate product of technological innovations, which allowed correspondents to transmit live or nearly live from field locations around the country and with equal ease from around the world. The change reflects both the influence of technology and the importance of speed and pictures in television news.

Figure 3, based on only the "international" and "foreign" stories, reflects the character of TV news that Walter Lippmann observed in the print media early in the century. His characterization of newspapers as "restless searchlights," moving from one event to another, one part of the social environment to another, applies even more to television. Only major events survive the competition for airtime and that means that only one or two parts of the world are likely to appear on TV screens on a regular basis (Wallis and Baran, 1990, p. 21). As the searchlight moves to a new crisis, the old focus fades to darkness. Thus, in Figure 3, we see the disappearance of Asia in the late 1970s as political attention turned to the Middle East and then to Eastern Europe. Latin America received surprisingly little attention, even though it was the focus of American government attention and filled with the kind of disruption that attracts media attention. However, an increased focus on Latin America in the 1980s continued the trend of increasing attention on this area in the 1970s, noted by Larson (1984).

For Figure 4, we collapsed the set of content topics into four broad categories that distinguish roughly between "hard" news, such as political and economic news and "soft" news, such as human interest stories, but isolates a special category of "disruption." We were limited to the general coding scheme that had been developed for the large-scale UNESCO project, which did not distinguish between positive or negative emphasis in covering events that are not inherently positive or negative. As a result, the category of disruption includes natural disasters, accidents, terrorism and political violence but not war, crime or disruptive aspects of any of the other categories. "Domestic hard news" refers domestic news in other countries, but does not refer to U.S. domestic stories, which have been eliminated. "International hard news" refers to hard news about the United States and a foreign country.

Nevertheless, trends over time and comparative breakdowns are useful. The figure shows that "coups and earthquake" coverage is a relatively small part of television's world, which is heavily devoted to the serious topics of hard news in other countries and between the United States and other countries. "Soft news is about a quarter of television's coverage of foreign and international news, a proportion that has not changed appreciably in two decades. The networks may be relying on their other programs or leaving the softer coverage to cable channels. In fact, the data probably reflect the common gatekeeper dilemma of choosing what to leave out rather than what to include. With the technology now available, the press of deadline events usually forces reports of the less compelling events to the periphery of the schedule, to Sunday morning, the magazine programs or the tape library.

On the whole, network TV coverage of the world at the end of the 1980s was similar to the TV world at the beginning of the 1970s. Whatever strengths and weaknesses it had then -- with the exception of the mild influence of technology to make more use of on-the-scene correspondents -- apply to the beginning of the 1990s as well.

Network differences. Since most people watch only one network and most journalists spend an inordinate amount of time criticizing each other, the question arises whether networks differ in their coverage. The answer, as shown in Table 1, is a clear negative. A couple of caveats are in order, however.

Table 1 about here

Tests of significance are omitted because with samples of 10,000 almost every difference is significant but not necessarily meaningful. This is certainly the case when considering whether the 19% of foreign stories on ABC differs from the 21% on NBC. It is also true that similar-appearing numbers can hide substantial differences in coverage of specific stories and in coverage of the same stories.

Studies have shown that the front pages of major papers contain relatively little overlap. While the number of stories on a 30-minute telecast is limited, and networks are more or less compelled to cover the same top two or three events, important differences are likely behind the surface similarities.

Table 2, however, does indicate interesting differences between the kind of reporting done by the anchors in the studio and the correspondents at the scene of the action. The data suggest that a significant amount of foreign (as opposed to international) reporting is handled by the anchor. This seems to include a fair number of stories of events that take place outside of American involvement where the traditional wire services or news-film services supply material that is read in the studio. Note the large difference in average time between correspondent and anchor stories. Sending a correspondent -- even a foreign correspondent -- to cover a story is often restricted to events that involve the United States. Once the decision is made, coverage tends to be longer than if the story is picked up off the wire and read by the anchor. It is usually the hard international events that get reported by a correspondent, while domestic hard news is more frequently covered by the anchor in the studio. The soft news stories are handled about equally by anchor and field reporter.

Tables 2-4 about here

One of the major complaints from the Third World during the NWIO debate was that Western coverage placed heavy emphasis on disruptive events in the Third World. The developing world -- or even the entire world outside the United States -- claimed it made the news only when a coup or earthquake propelled the country, however briefly, into the searchlight.

Table 3 provides some support for the complaints. Even in our narrow category of disruptive news -- essentially coups and earthquakes -- foreign news includes a much higher proportion of disruption than either domestic or international stories. The response, of course, is that these events aren't covered because they take place in the Third World but that they are newsworthy anywhere and happen to take place in developing countries in greater frequencies than at home or in other Western countries.

Some of the differences by region in Table 4 are predictable. After all, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East were caught in the throes of social upheaval and coverage of that is defensible. It is interesting that even more coverage of Western Europe was devoted to disruptive events. This argues against the charge that the Third

World is uniquely singled out for heavy coups-and-earthquake coverage. Europe, both East and West, got more soft news coverage than other parts of the world, suggesting that reporting from these two parts of the planet is more varied than from the Third World. Further analysis of the large data set can sort out some of the complexities that this brief summary must hide.

Methodological Considerations. One of the problems inherent in any content analysis of news media is that the coding unit is almost always the news story or news item, while the unit of analysis may be -- or should be -- different. Using the news story as the unit of analysis means that a one-inch filler at the bottom of the back page of the paper gets the same weight in the analysis as a story covering the entire front page. In our study, a ten-second item read in the studio counts as much as a correspondent report that could take up a full segment of four or five minutes. Does this make any difference?

Table 5 about here

With the large UNESCO data set, Stevenson and Shaw (1984) concluded that measuring stories or a unit of length (standardized column-centimeter) in general had little influence on the outcome of the analysis. We can address the same question by weighting the data by time, which was included as a variable, and rerunning parts of the analysis. In Table 5, the total time is the 16,000+ minutes represented by the nearly 10,000 stories. In fact, there are several important differences.

While anchors report half the stories, they account for only one fifth of the total air time. Correspondent reports, which tend to be used extensively in international coverage (but not so much in what we have defined as foreign coverage), represent slightly less than half the total stories but more than three-quarters of total air time. As a result, when measured by time, international coverage increases but at the expense of both domestic and foreign coverage.

Geographic distribution of the international and foreign news varies little according to the method of analysis, but topics do. Here we use the full range of 20 categories included in the UNESCO study. When time is used as the basis of measurement, politics -- both foreign and domestic -- increase in importance while economics -- especially macro-level economics, which includes a lot of brief stock summaries -- declines. Other changes tend to be smaller

A conclusion from Table 5 is that, on the whole, results are unlikely to vary dramatically if one bases analysis on time or space rather than number of stories. However, with the weighting command in most statistical packages, it is easy enough to switch to time or space as a base and probably should be done if nothing more than as a check on the more traditional method of analysis.

Conclusions

Looking at the forest rather than a few trees has some advantages, although the resolution of detail is always less. In this case, several changes (and lack of changes) in network TV's coverage of the world over nearly two decades can be noted.

1. There was a small but steady increase in the amount of attention given to the rest of the world, particularly when the United States was also involved. Whether this trend will continue in the face of cutbacks in network news and the rise of cable alternatives cannot be predicted. Whether a 40% share of the 23-minute newshole is enough cannot be answered without an outside criterion. By itself, it is probably less than in other national TV newscasts, although most viewers in the United States have access to more international programming and greater variety of sources than the public of other countries.
2. Technology seems to have shifted the spotlight from the studio anchor to the correspondent on the ground. Because their reports are longer and arrive quickly, foreign correspondents are probably accounting for a greater proportion of total airtime.

3. Foreign and international coverage still is unbalanced geographically and emphasizes disruption more than domestic coverage does. What has been called "soft news" gets relatively less play in foreign and international news.

4. Results are to some degree a function of the method of analysis as well as the definitions of categories and other methodological details. Alternative bases of analysis, such as time or space vs. number of stories, are not likely to reverse findings but should be considered.

In conclusion, the study suggests that network TV coverage of the world at the end of the 1980s did not differ substantially from the TV world at the beginning of the 1970s. The challenge for future studies is to address the impact of cable alternatives, the emergence of new technologies and the mounting financial pressures in network news on foreign and international news coverage.

References

Almaney, A. 1970. International and foreign affairs on network television news. *Journal of Broadcasting* 14, 4: 499-509.

Hester, A. 1978. Five years of foreign news on U.S. television newscasts. *Gazette* 24, 1: 86-95.

Hester, A. 1973. Theoretical Considerations in Predicting Volume and Direction of International Information Flow. *Gazette* 19, 4: 239-247.

Hicks, R. and Gordon, A. 1974. Foreign News Content in Israeli and U.S. Newspapers. *Journalism Quarterly* 51: 639-644.

Holsti, O. 1969. *Content Analysis for the Social Science and Humanities.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Larson, J. 1984. *Television's Window on the World.* Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.

Larson, J., and Hardy, A. 1977. International affairs coverage on network television news: A study of news flow. *Gazette* 23, 4: 241-256.

Robinson, G. and Sparkes, V. 1976. International News in the Canadian and American Press: A comparative news flow study. *Gazette*, 22, 4: 208-215.

Scott, W. 1955. Reliability in content analysis: A case of nominal scale coding. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 17: 321-325.

Sreberny-Mohammadi, A., et al. 1985. *Foreign News in the Media: International Reporting in Twenty-Nine Countries.* Paris: UNESCO.

Stevenson, R., Childers, H., West, P., and Marschalk, S. 1990. Soviet Media in the Age of Glasnost, in Martin, L. and Hiebert, R. (eds), *Current Issues in International Communication.* New York: Longman.

Stevenson, R. and Shaw, D. 1984. *Foreign News and the New World Information Order.* Ames, Iowa: Iowa State Press.

Wallis, R., and Baran, S. 1990. *The Known World of Broadcast News: International News and the Electronic Media,.* London: Routledge.

Weaver, J., Porter, C. and Evans, M. 1984. Patterns in foreign news coverage on U.S. network television: A ten year analysis. *Journalism Quarterly* 61, 2: 356-363.

Figure 1. U.S. Television Network News Attention to Domestic, International (Involving U.S. and Other Countries) and Foreign News, 1972-1989

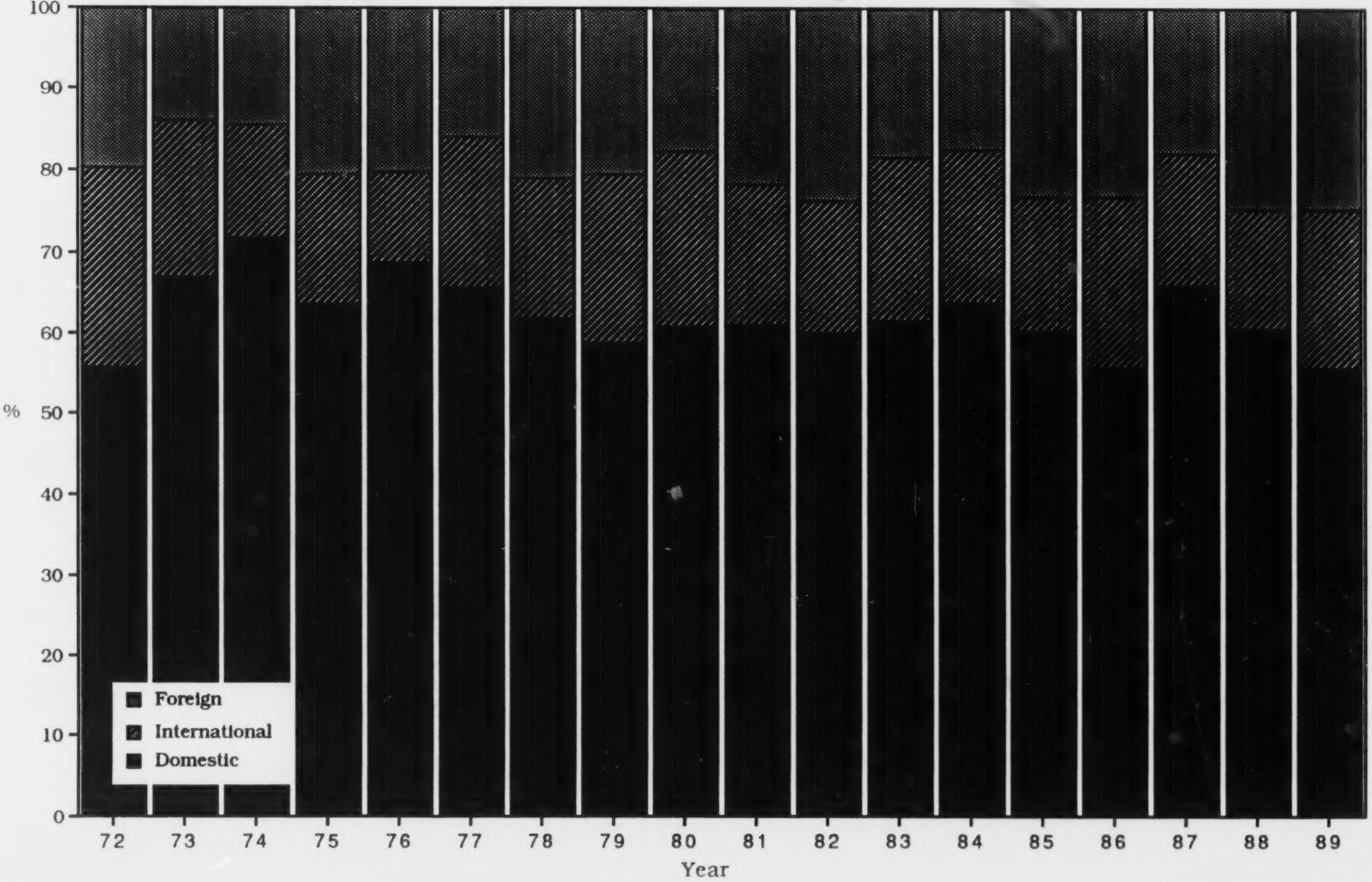


Figure 2. Reporting of U.S. Television Network News, 1972-1989

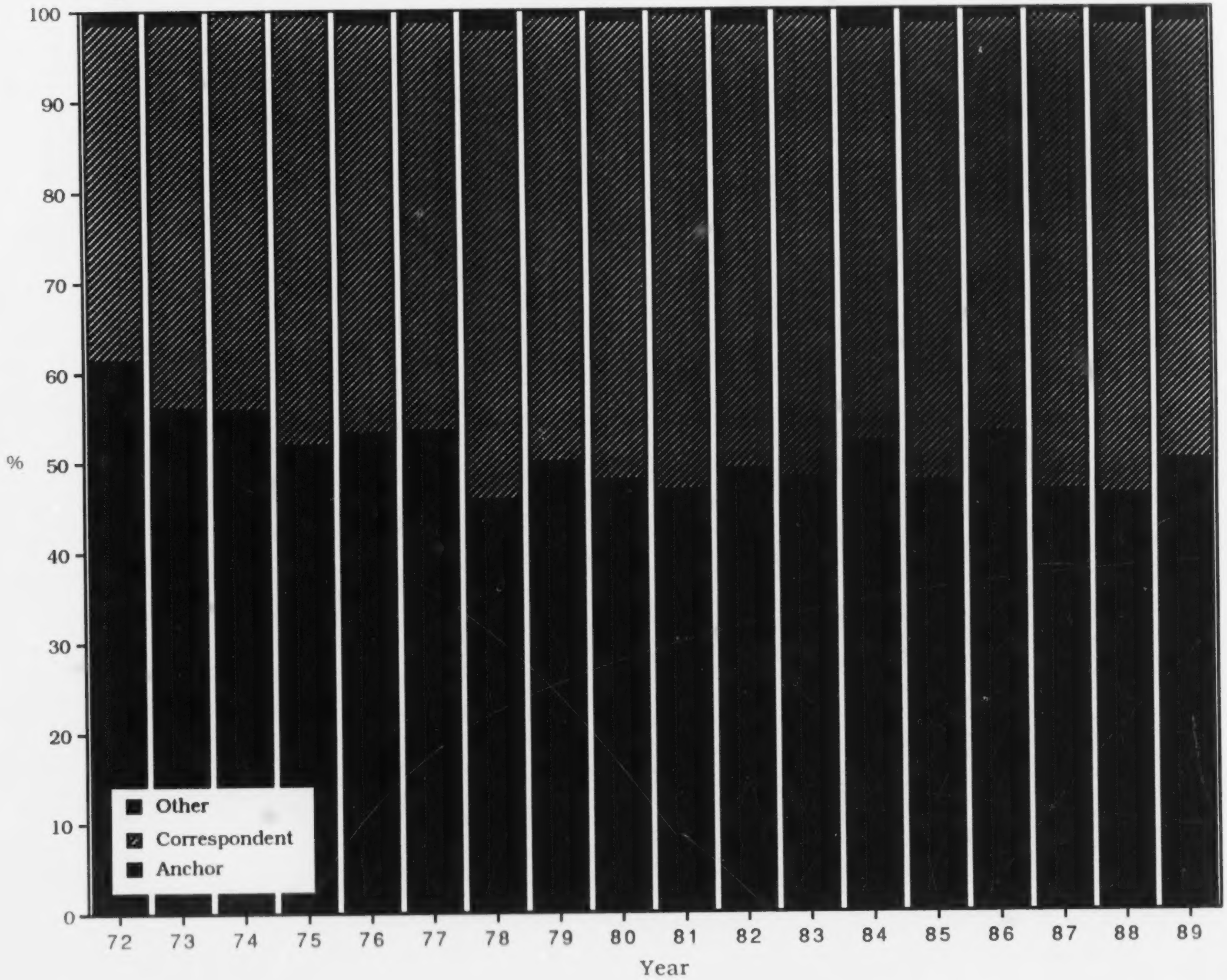


Figure 3. Geographic Location of Foreign and International News on U.S. Network Television News

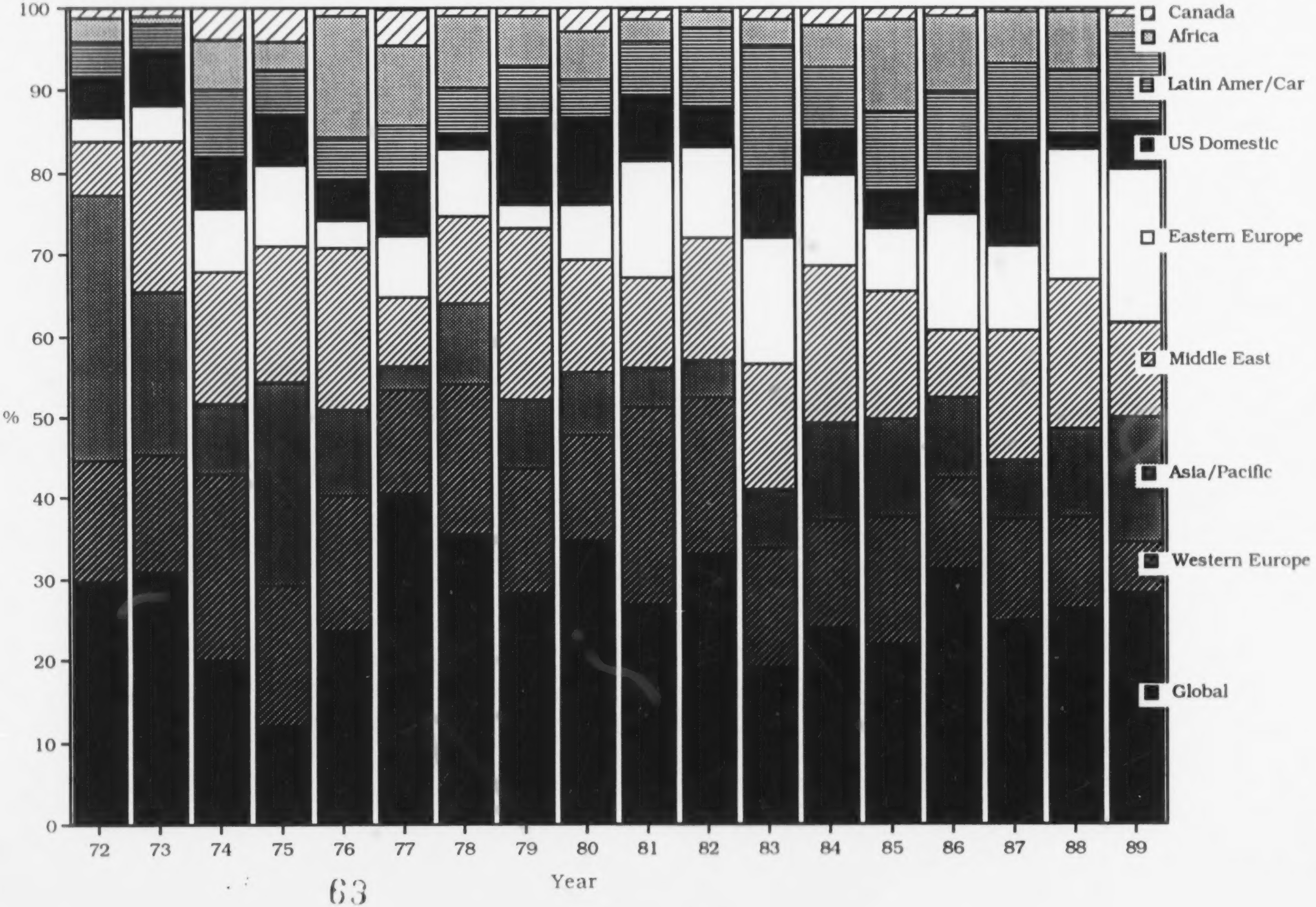


Figure 4. Topic of International and Foreign News on U.S. Television Network News, 1972-1989

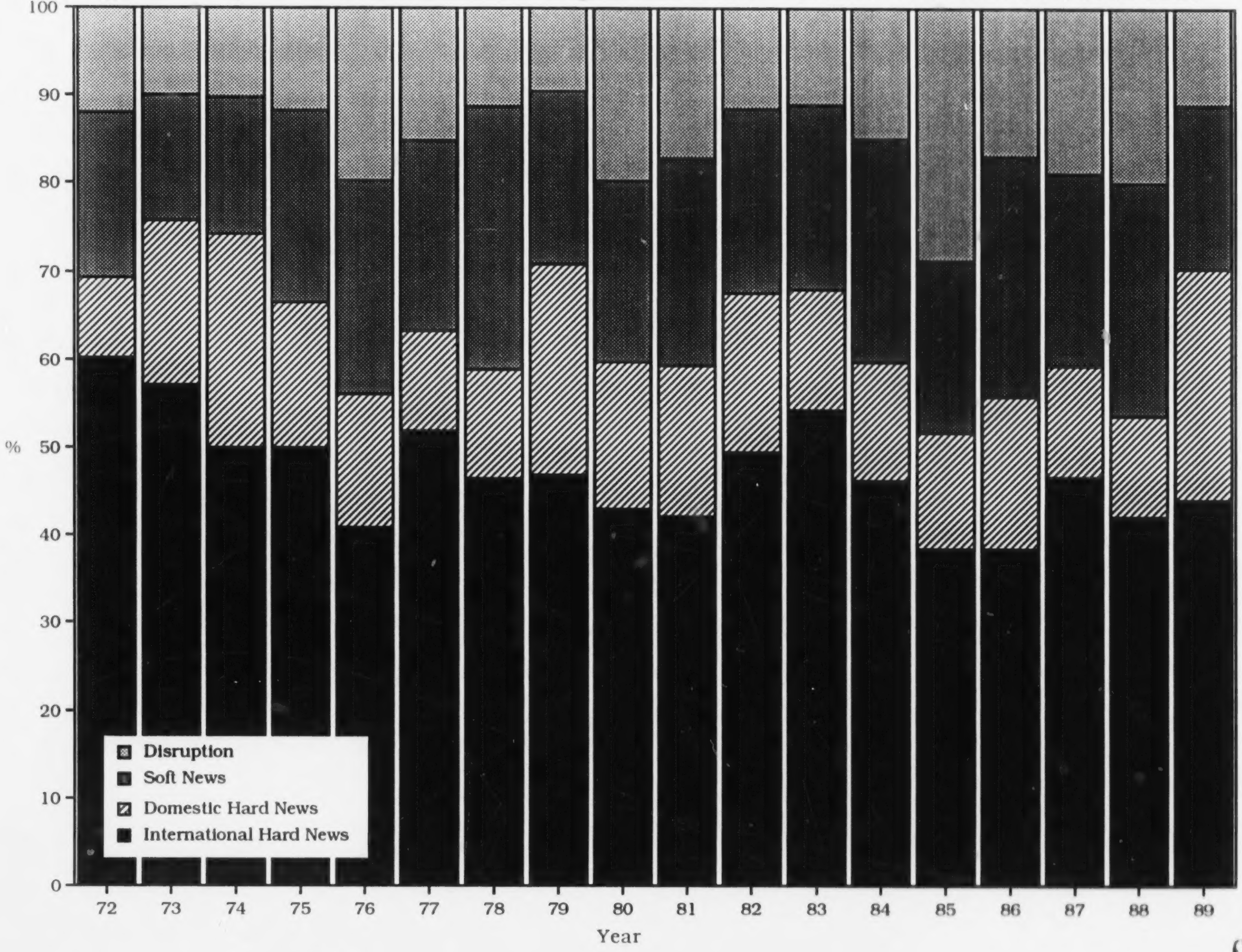


Table 1. Comparisons Among Networks

network	ABC	CBS	NBC
n=	3,122	3,379	3,413
time (minutes)	1.63	1.62	1.62
type			
anchor	50%	53%	51%
correspondent	49	46	48
other	1	1	1
category			
Domestic	62%	64%	61%
International	20	16	18
Foreign	19	20	21
topic			
International hard	20%	19%	21%
Domestic hard	34	35	33
Soft	37	37	37
Disruption	10	9	9
geographic location			
U.S. Domestic	64%	66%	63%
Canada	1	1	1
Latin Amer/Carib	3	3	3
Africa	2	2	2
W. Europe	5	6	6
E. Europe	4	4	4
Middle East	6	5	5
Asia/Pacific	5	4	5
Global/regional	11	10	11

Table 2. Comparisons between Anchor and Correspondent Reporting

type	Anchor	Correspondent
n=	5,065	4,729
time	0.63	2.68
category		
Domestic	64%	60%
International	14	22
Foreign	22	18
topic		
International hard	18%	23%
Domestic hard	36	31
Soft	37	38
Disruption	10	9

Table 3. Comparisons Among Domestic, International and Foreign Stories.

	Domestic	International	Foreign
n=	6,172	1,775	1,964
time in minutes	1.57	2.08	1.39
topic			
International hard	---	65%	31%
Domestic hard	46%	10	22
Soft	48	17	26
Disruption	6	8	21

Table 4. Comparisons Among Regions.

	US Domestic	Canada	Latin America	Africa	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Middle East	Asia/Pacific	Global
n=	6,359	73	284	218	575	362	545	460	1,036
time in seconds	1.58	1.57	1.62	1.42	1.42	1.45	1.59	1.51	2.18
topic									
International hard	5%	26%	41%	32%	18%	32%	57%	49%	67%
Domestic hard	43	27	19	26	19	24	13	20	9
Soft	45	34	19	23	38	34	8	22	16
Disruption	6	12	22	20	25	11	21	10	8

Table 5. Comparisons between Story and Time as Unit of Analysis

	Story	Time
n=	9,918	16,111
type		
anchor	31.5%	19.9%
correspondent	34.1	78.6
other	34.4	1.4
category		
Domestic	62.3%	60.1%
International	17.9	22.9
Foreign	19.8	17.0
geographic location		
US Domestic	64.4%	62.5%
Canada	0.7	0.7
LA/Car.	2.9	2.8
Africa	2.2	1.9
WEurope	5.8	5.1
EEurope	3.7	3.3
Middle East	5.5	5.4
Asia/Pacific	4.6	4.3
Global	10.5	14.0
topic		
International politics	11.5	14.5
Domestic politics	17.6	20.2
Military, defense, war coverage	7.9	8.7
Macro economics	11.2	7.4
Micro economics	4.9	3.8
International aid	0.5	0.4
Social services-conditions/health	5.8	6.3
Crime/law/justice	11.5	10.6
Culture/arts	0.8	1.0
Religion	0.9	1.0
Science/technology	2.6	2.3
Sports	2.5	3.2
Entertainment	0.7	0.9
Personalities	3.7	2.8
Human interest	3.7	4.3
Education	0.5	0.6
Ecology/environment/weather	3.1	2.9
Natural disasters/accidents	4.6	4.0
Other	1.1	0.7
Terrorism/violent protest	4.9	4.4

Visual Communication

Eye on Soweto:

A study of factors in news photo use

Sue O'Brien
Associate professor
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
The University of Colorado

Paper presented to the Visual Communication Division,
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
Annual Convention, Boston, August 1991

Campus Box 287; Boulder, Colorado 80309
(303) 492-0447 (office); (303) 777-0404 (home)

Eye on Soweto:
A study of factors in news photo use

On Sept. 15, 1990, freelance photographer Gregory Marinovich documented a mob of African National Congress supporters killing a man they believed to be a Zulu spy. His photos, although they would eventually win a Pulitzer Prize, presented editors with a tough set of decisions that Saturday afternoon.

Marinovich and Associated Press reporter Tom Cohen spotted the man being led from a Soweto, South Africa, train-station platform by a group armed with machetes and crude spears. As Marinovich and Cohen continued to watch, the man was stoned, bludgeoned, stabbed and, ultimately, doused with gasoline and set afire (Cohen 1990, "Another Day," 15 September).

Marinovich's dramatic photographs (see figures 1 and 2) cleared the AP picture wire later that day, precipitating intense newsroom debate of ethical questions raised by the photos and the circumstances under which they were shot.

The pictures were riveting.

The delight of the man's tormentors was evident throughout the series. Two photos — the burning and a stabbing — offered an explicit, almost clinical, view of calculated murder. And what of the photographer's role? Could he have done more to stop the attack? Did his camera goad the crowd?

Associated Press policy is to "transmit what we think is the right thing," said Tom Stathis, AP's senior photo editor for North America. "What a newspaper does with it is [its] decision. Graphic violence just for violence's sake with no context — we don't move that. ... We're not here to provide the sensational or grotesque."

As the series was being transmitted, several member editors called AP with questions. "There were some legitimate questions raised about the photographer's ability, or lack of ability, to stop the situation," Stathis said.

An advisory, which ran only on the photo wire, explained the photographer's role in the incident. "One of [the attackers] told me to stop taking pictures," Marinovich later said. "I said I'd stop shooting when they stopped killing him." Although the gang initially slowed its attack, the man was ultimately killed. (Cohen 1990, 24 September; "Pulitzer prize-winning" 1991).

Although some editors recognized that they were seeing prize-winning photos, that didn't make their decision any easier. "Prizes are prizes. They're not for readers," said Roman Lyskowski, graphics editor for the Miami Herald.

Ultimately, the Soweto photos won the Leica Medal of Excellence, Overseas Press Club award and Pulitzer Prize for spot news photography ("AP's Pulitzer winner" 1991; O'Brien, Shake and Nolan 1991a; O'Brien, Shake and Nolan 1991b). "It's a wonderful compliment," Marinovich said of the Pulitzer. "It just bothers me that I have to get glory in this way, with that poor man dying" ("Pulitzer prize-winning" 1991). Marinovich worked in South Africa under the pseudonym Sebastian Balic, fearing South African government retribution for his coverage of racial and factional tensions.

This is a study of how editors seek to balance their duties as journalists with the sensitivities of their audiences and, specifically, of how the editors of 57 North American newspapers decided to use the Marinovich photographs. Several editors said they had received little help from traditional gauges of reader acceptance such as the "breakfast," "distance," and "dead body" tests. The most significant finding was that editors who gave aggressive play to the more dramatic photos were generally also careful to place the graphics in the most complete news context available.

The literature

On a limited range of stories, fairly firm rules are available to help editors through the ethical quagmire of the news day: The identities of sex-crime victims and most juveniles are protected; dead body shots are to be used only in the most extreme cases; victims aren't identified until their families have been notified. Suggestive sexuality is out; so is most profanity. But as the literature makes clear, no consensus exists on questions of degree: How much blood or pain is too much? Is the moment of death less objectionable than its aftermath? Is a death half the world away important enough to disturb readers? How much more sensitive should editors be if their product is to be read at the breakfast table — or during the Sunday-morning family hours?

To be recommended for publication, a high-impact news photograph must already have passed a series of tests (Brown 1987; Patterson and Wilkins 1991; Rivers and Mathews 1988). Technical quality must be acceptable. The image must be both fair and authentic in its representation of what happened. The story must be significant and told effectively.

But even after these tests are passed, the dramatic photo still faces an ethical screening. Here, the values generally distill to issues of compassion and taste. Concerns of compassion focus on victimization and privacy; those of taste center on violence, dignity and decency (Finberg and Itule 1990; Parsons and Smith 1988). Questions of responsibility also emerge: Does the story threaten the national welfare or encourage criminal (MacDougall 1971) or copy-cat behavior (Streitfeld 1987; Rosenberg 1987)?

Important in these deliberations, too, is the photographer's role at the scene. Many worry that the camera can incite extreme behavior. Others pose a question of simple morality: Why did the photographer just click the shutter instead of intervene (Hartley 1983; Goodwin 1987; Elliott 1990; Hodges 1983)?

Over the years, students of photojournalism ethics have been presented a number of valuable opportunities to study the way different editors responded to difficult photo choices. Pennsylvania State Treasurer R. Budd Dwyer's public suicide in January 1987 yielded perhaps the most concentrated study. (See Baker, Parsons and Smith, Matviko, Kochersberger, all 1988, for comparisons of different editors' use of the Dwyer stills and video; Fulton 1988 and Rosenberg 1987 are also useful sources on issues raised by Dwyer). Other writers studied editor reaction to photos of a boy impaled by the jaw on a picket fence (Steele 1989); a picketing hotel worker run over by a strike-breaker's car (Goodwin 1987); and the aftermath of a Bakersfield, Calif., drowning (Gordon 1986; Christians 1991; Patterson and Wilkins 1991; Stein 1986; Street 1986; Rivers and Mathews 1988). Fairly consistently, these photographs possessed debatable news value, were shot in the United States and raised primary issues of dignity and privacy, both for subjects and survivors.

More recently, there have been few chances for systematic, newspaper-by-newspaper study of photos that, like Soweto, offer strong news values, exist in an international context, and raise primary issues of reader squeamishness. Nevertheless, fine historical and critical work has been done on such cases as Malcolm W. Browne's photos of the self-immolation of a Vietnamese monk ("A Bonze's" 1963; Knightley 1975; MacDougall 1971; Gormley 1984; Hulteng 1985); Horst Faas and Michel Laurent's pictures of a mob murder in Dacca, Bangladesh (Hulteng 1985; Gross 1988; Lewinski 1978; Fulton 1988); Eddie Adams' series on the street execution of a Viet Cong officer (Bailey and Lichty 1972; Nakahara 1982; Knightley 1975; Rosenberg 1987; Hulteng 1985); and the thwarted Iran-hostage rescue mission (Gordon 1980, Goodwin 1987, Hulteng 1985).

Also of interest is the controversy surrounding J. Ross Baughman's 1977 decision to don the uniform and weaponry of the mercenary Grey Scouts to document the squad's treatment of black prisoners in Rhodesia ("U.S. Photographer" 1977; "Pulitzer flurries" 1978; "Pulitzer prizes" 1978; Carmody 1978; Elliott 1990; Fulton 1988; Leekley and Leekley 1982; Lester 1991). In the United States, similar issues of incitement and failure to prevent harm were raised when an Alabama television crew stood by and shot tape as a disturbed man set himself afire (Hodges 1983; Henry 1983; Lester 1991; Hulteng 1985; Goodwin 1987).

As thoughtful editors try to decide whether to run distressing copy or photographs, two values are consistently in the balance: the good publication can accomplish for the larger society against the harm publication can do to people involved in the story or to the sensitivities of the community (MacDougall 1971; Gross 1978, Finberg and Itule 1990; Hartley 1983; Lester 1991). Does the inherent news value of the story outweigh the claims of other values?

But clear standards are hard to come by. "Compassion," writes Goodwin, "does not easily translate into a standard or a guideline. ('Be compassionate in the following circumstances .... Don't be compassionate in the following circumstances ....')" (1987, 318). Nor is "taste" easily defined. Tom Kelly of the Pottstown, Pa., Mercury, acknowledged that his photos of a berserk young father who had killed his wife and stabbed his daughter and grandmother may have been "shocking or horrifying." But, he added, "none was distasteful" (Goodwin 1987, 215). Perhaps the most useful delineation comes from Gormley: "Compassion is not the same as good taste. If a reader knows the person pictured in a very dramatic photograph, he may find it offensive. That's a sin against compassion. If he is offended whether he knows the person or not, the sin is probably one against good taste" (1984, 58).

Reader reaction is of paramount concern to editors. "Paragraphs are deleted, photos are cropped, entire stories are withheld, all because editors realize that readers have a right not to know certain information, especially in a family newspaper"

(McCulloch 1984, 89; also see Finberg and Itule 1990). Lester (1991, 65) offers 11 characteristics of a photo likely to inspire reader protest. If five or more are present, he predicts, a firestorm is likely. Editors could pull as many as six of the Lester triggers if they chose to run a Soweto photo: 1) in color, 2) in a morning paper, 3) on the front page, 4) with no story accompaniment, 5) showing the victim's body, and 6) showing the body to be physically traumatized.

Lurking always is the reader suspicion that sensational photos are chosen simply to "pander to morbid tastes" (Christians 1991, 155) or to sell newspapers (Lester 1991). The charge is heatedly disputed by photographers. "I have heard this line many times and it angers me," writes Bryant (1987, 32). "Not once have I taken a picture or had it published because it was sensationalistic, with the hope that it will increase circulation. Never!!"

CONSIDERATIONS OF COMPASSION. The cry for compassion is generally expressed in relation to the sudden shock of survivorship, sanctity of grief, and privacy of victims and other innocents (Padgett 1985-86, 1988; Izard 1985-85;). The eloquent plea that "everyone should be entitled to the privacy of his or her own death" comes from a non-journalist friend of Jeff Miller, one of the students killed at Kent State (Wischmann 1987, 68). Survivors and friends are also to be spared unbearable memories. In the aftermath of the Budd Dwyer suicide, Baker reports, several newspapers spelled out why they weren't running the photos: "The Corry Journal had access to the full Associated Press photo file," ran the Jan. 23, 1987, editor's note. "We chose not to run them on the grounds that they intruded on the private lives of the surviving members of the Dwyer family" (Baker 1988,p. 23 note; also see "Hillsborough crowd" 1989; Gordon 1986; Wischmann 1987).

Gormley's distinction between "people we know" and others helps shape the "distance test" cited by many editors and ethicists. "The closer to home an event occurs, the more likely readers will be upset over the use of graphic news photographs of the event" (Finberg and Itule 1990, 111; also see Lester 1991; Steele 1989; Goodwin, 1987; Gordon 1986; Hulteng, 1985). In the Dwyer case, Baker found that "newspapers more than 200 miles away were nearly three times as likely to run 'very graphic' photos than those within 200 miles" (1988, 20-21). Parsons and Smith, however, report a perverse inversion of the proximity test, quoting one news director who cited the "intensely local" nature of the Dwyer suicide as justification for running the most graphic video (1988, 90).

Hulteng (1985) further reminds us that distance may measure either geography or psychology. The dead-body photos of victims of Hindu mobs in 1983, for example, might have been far less acceptable had the bloated, disfigured bodies been those of American children. As cult members, the victims of the Jonestown mass suicide were also "distant" from the average reader. In a 1984 study of news magazines, Tsang found that photos from the Third World were more likely to portray violence while U.S. photos more often were related to non-violent stories. Kobre (1980, 219) reports some critics' suspicion — denied by magazine officials — that National Geographic was more tolerant of bare breasts in Africa than it would be in the United States.

Little explicit research has been conducted, however, into whether ethnic and racial distances also help "sanitize" disturbing pictures. Lester (1991, 59) is one of few writers even to address this question directly:

> One heartening note: Readers will voice their negative comments about a picture regardless of the victim's race or gender characteristics. Readers seem to be equal opportunity commentators. Many of the most controversial images printed in newspapers in the past 15 years have received reader wrath with subjects who were men, women, African-American, Asian, Caucasian, or Hispanic.

CONSIDERATIONS OF TASTE. As used here, "taste" goes far beyond the slapstick and bizarre. The stark reality so prized by journalists — photos of gore, death, violence and grief — may evoke parallel fears of offending readers' sense of good taste

(Finberg and Itule 1990; Singletary and Lamb 1984). Although these issues can sometimes be more aesthetic than ethical, they are no less real for editors (Hodges 1983; see also Fink 1988; McCulloch 1984). Goodwin (1987) and Hulteng (1985), in fact, argue that even aesthetic questions are ethical when they force journalists to decide when stories are too important to be screened from a squeamish public.

The most popular application of the "taste" test comes, to extend a bad metaphor, at the breakfast table. References in the literature are legion. "Orange juice and fried monk for breakfast? ... How would it look over the breakfast table?" one editor responded to an American Society of Newspaper Editors' survey after AP offered shots of the self-immolation of a Vietnamese monk (Hulteng 1985, 53; also see Steele 1989; Goodwin 1987, 215).

The breakfast test has tricky variations. Some editors apply different news values to morning and evening papers (Hulteng 1985). Others may deal more carefully with "offensive" material when young readers are involved. The fact that a severe winter storm had kept school children at home helped guide some Pennsylvania television news directors' decisions on how to use the graphic footage of Pennsylvania State Treasurer R. Budd Dwyer's suicide in 1987 (Parsons and Smith 1988, 89).

In all but the most important stories, some newspapers historically have forbidden the portrayal of dead bodies or the moment of death (Parsons and Smith 1988; Christians 1991; Goodwin 1987). A principal proponent of the dead-body ban was Marlen Pew of Editor and Publisher, who in 1937 inveighed against "all such cadaverous and disgusting stuff" (MacDougall 1971, 38). But at the same time, other editors defended using grisly photographs to underscore the enormity of some crimes. The Madison (Wis.) Capital Times in 1934, for instance, argued that grim photos could "take the halos from the brows of the lynching leaders" (MacDougall 1971, 4; but also see Kobre 1980). By World War II, death photos were by no means a rarity, but a military ban on releasing photographs of dead American soldiers prevailed until 1943 (Fulton 1988). As recently as 1989, the British Press Council cautioned in its "Hillsborough crowd" opinion that photographs of the dead should be used with great care, although "there are rare occasions when a newspaper may justify publishing an identifiable picture of a fatal casualty."

Although neophytes may think photographers' ultimate test lies in capturing high-risk moments of danger, Nakahara (1983) reports that these feats have declining value. "Seizing the exact moment life meets death," she writes, "is an athletic and fortuitous feat that is becoming less astounding as such pictures become more plentiful." In the Dwyer suicide, Parsons and Smith (1988) report that 11 (of 19) news directors surveyed said the story could be fully told without showing the actual moment of death. With direct relevance to the Soweto photos, the researchers also note that death by immolation "may somehow be more 'sanitized' than a bloody death" (1986, 86).

Additional evidence of professional self-policing comes from Singletary and Lamb (1984), who found that only three photos among 111 studied in their survey of award-winning news photos (2.7 percent) showed graphic detail such as blood.

CONSIDERATIONS OF NEWS VALUE. In the most intrusive stories, many editors demand that the facts be so significant that the public's need to know clearly outweighs considerations of privacy and taste (Street 1986; Gormley 1984; Brown 1987, among others). Editors commonly have argued that the "need to know" test is met in stories that ring a "warning bell" against preventable dangers (MacDougall 1971; Kobré 1980; Stein 1986); alert readers to public policy issues on which they may wish to act (Rosenberg 1987; Hulteng 1985; MacDougall 1971; "Hillsborough crowd" 1989); or broaden readers' view of the world by "bringing them face-to-face with parts of reality that they would like to deny" (Elliott 1990, 2; see also Hodges 1983; Rivers and Mathews 1988; Moeller 1989).

But the utilitarian balancing of, in particular, the "warning bell" often leads to rationalization: We'll run this shocking photo, but only to discourage teen-age drinking, unsupervised swimming, playing with matches, etc. Padgett argues that this reasoning "fails miserably" when applied, for instance, to Stanley Foreman's dramatic photos of a young Boston woman falling to her death from a neglected fire escape (1985-86, 52; also see Christians 1991; Steele 1989; Hulteng 1985).

Others fear the self-censorship of utilitarian balancing can obscure important insights (Finberg and Itule 1990; Goodwin 1987). NBC decided to "go to black" before the bloody final frames of the execution of a Viet Cong officer during the 1968 Tet offensive. One person who worked on the film later regretted the decision. Some close-up views of the corpse should have been shown, he said. "Americans were getting a 'too sanitized' picture of the war and they should have had 'their noses rubbed in' the violence and gore" (Bailey and Lichty 1972, 225).

CONSIDERATIONS OF THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S ROLE. The photographer's shoot-or-don't-shoot decision may be one of journalism's most difficult (Patterson and Wilkins 1991, 168), but it is not the subject of this analysis. Editors assigning photographers, however, should not press for ethical violations in the field. Deseret News photographer Garry Bryant's guidelines for his own behavior are useful, too, for those who oversee photojournalists' work:

> 1. I have to determine if the private moment of pain and suffering I find myself watching needs to be seen. Should this moment become public? If so, does it tell the story or part of the story of this event?
>
> 2. Are the people involved in such shambles over the moment that being photographed will send them into greater trauma?
>
> 3. Am I at a distance trying to be as unobtrusive as possible?
>
> 4. Am I acting with compassion and sensitivity?" (Bryant 1987, 34).

Once photographs reach the newsroom, however, the ethical editor owes readers answers to two questions: Did the camera in any way shape or distort the event (Hodges

1983; Henry 1983; Hulteng 1985; Goodwin 1987)? Should the photographer have intervened to prevent the tragedy rather than to film it (Elliott 1990; Hulteng 1985; Nakahara 1982; Goodwin 1987; Kobre 1991; Rivers and Mathews 1988; Costa 1963)? If the answer in either case is yes, appropriate responses may include running the photos accompanied by a forthright editor's note, withholding the photos, or dismissing the photographer.

Both incitement and intervention issues were raised when AP photographer J. Ross Baughman won the Pulitzer Prize for photos shot after he'd joined the Grey Scouts' patrol in Rhodesia (Carmody 1968; Fulton 1988, Elliott 1990; Lester 1991; Leekley and Leekley 1982). Although Baughman admitted to Elliott (1990) that he might have inhibited some of the Scouts' brutal treatment of prisoners, he argued that his pose of sympathy with the mercenaries was necessary to gain access to an important story. Again, in Dacca, Bangladesh, incitement was the issue when photographers Faas and Laurent stayed behind to record the torture and murder of suspected Pakistani sympathizers after other journalists left the scene. Critics contended that the brutal "photo opportunity" would never have progressed had cameras not been on hand (Lewinski 1978; Gross 1988;

Similarly, the shoot-or-intervene dilemma has no simple solution. Journalists may not be able to adequately document reality without sometimes taking advantage of what Elliott calls "the special privilege of watching life's drama from the sidelines" (1990, 2). Goodwin cautions, however, that tolerance levels may be changing. The self-immolation of a Buddhist monk in 1963 was considered by many to be "the ultimate form of political expression" (Kobre 1991, 305). Reporter Peter Arnett and photographer Malcolm Browne faced little criticism for their decision not to intervene (Elliott 1990; Knightley 1975). Today, however, Goodwin suggests that they would likely be questioned "whether the presence of their cameras did not inspire the protesting suicides and whether they should not have tried to stop them" (1987, 318). Army photographer Ronald Haeberle, who in 1968 photographed the My Lai massacre and made no effort to intervene, has been accused of "a total submergence of moral values" (Lewinski 1978, 214). By 1983, members of an Alabama television crew drew national censure for their failure to intervene in a self-immolation attempt by a severely disturbed man (Elliott 1990; Hodges 1983; Goodwin 1987).

The photographer who ventures upon another person in danger faces no dilemma if the situation carries no news value: Help should be given. Even in the newsworthy situation, Rivers and Mathews rule (1988, 146), "If no one else can help, the photographer must — and be satisfied with whatever pictures are then possible." For Elliott (1990), there's more ambiguity: "When journalists stumble upon life threatening scenes with no context within which to judge what's going on, they should help if they're needed. But when they set out to do a story that they think may involve crime or pain, they should be prepared to watch rather than react."

CONSIDERATIONS OF THE EDITOR'S ROLE. While the credibility and authenticity of a visual story depend on the photographer, readers see the story only through the frame provided by the editor. Decisions on play and accompanying copy are made at the news desk: How will this image hit our readers? Can we moderate the shock? Can we enhance the learning? "Even the most explicit story on a subject normally deemed offensive can be used in a newspaper or newscast if written in considered, responsible language and displayed appropriately" (Fink 1988, 37).

Perhaps the most important step is for editors to communicate directly with readers. Journalism's bad reputation with its public, Detroit Free Press editor David Lawrence Jr. suggested in 1983, may improve if editors do a better job of explaining how newspapers work (Friendly 1983). If a photo or story is troublesome, an early-warning editor's note or column may encourage a more thoughtful reception (Cunningham 1989;

Lester 1991). Similarly, an explanatory cutline can help readers share the photographer's shoot-or-don't-shoot dilemma in the field. The photo choice itself can be compassionate. Instead of a picture of a girl bloodied in an accident, for instance, the Reno Gazette-Journal chose a shot of the victim being comforted that stirred no adverse reaction (Stein 1986).

Readers also draw inferences from how photos and stories are combined. A large front-page picture with only a cursory cutline may seem disrespectful; photos should run on the same page as their accompanying stories (Lester 1991). Color can pose problems, seeming to add gratuitous drama to a sensitive image ("Hillsborough crowd" 1989; Lester 1991).

Over and over, however, students of journalism ethics warn that reader reaction should not govern editor's choices. The question should not be whether to run an important but sensitive photo, or where to hide it, but how to position it to communicate most effectively with readers.

Methodology

This study is based on content analysis of the September 16 and 17, 1990,[1] editions of 57 newspapers in the United States and Canada, all AP subscribers and all available through local news agencies or through the full-text NEXIS, VU/TEXT and DataTimes services. As the research progressed, telephone interviews were conducted with editors at 28 of the papers.[2]

The basic interview consisted of about ten open-ended questions focusing on editors' reasons for running, or not running, the photos; the decision to include or exclude specific shots; decisions relating to positioning and play of the photographs; and any formal or informal guidelines that might govern use of such material. Additional questions explored the selection of copy to accompany the stories; pattern of previous coverage of the South African troubles; process by which decisions on using the photos were made; and any reader reaction after publication.

---

[1] In all cases except those of USA Today and the New York Post, which do not publish on Sundays, the September 16 editions were analyzed. The September 17 editions of USA Today and the Post were studied.

[2] Interviews were conducted between Feb. 1 and April 15 by the author and by University of Colorado journalism students Mari Ann Shake and Mark Nolan.

Findings

Decisions on what to do with the photos varied across the country, with no apparent relationship to whether papers were large or small, Northern or Southern, tabloid or broadsheet, or conservative or aggressive in their journalism.

If any pattern emerges, it may be that newspapers in competitive markets like Denver, Minneapolis-St. Paul and New York were more likely to go with the harsh graphics. Both Chicago dailies, however, took a conservative approach. Only in Los Angeles — where the Times ran the burning in color on the cover and the Daily News ran a mild Mandela file mug — did two competing papers take a markedly different approach.[3]

Whether or not editors used the shots of the mob murder, many said they got little help from old tests for acceptability — for example, whether the photo would flunk the time-honored "breakfast test." Formal policies on the use of dead-body photos often were used for guidance, although most editors said these rules were only advisory, never binding.

Among papers that used the more shocking Marinovich images — the stabbing or the burning — an important editing difference emerged. Papers that chose the most aggressive play were careful to use accompanying stories to explain the significance and relevance of the photos. In contrast, papers that chose the burning, but placed it on an inside page in a single-photo package, were stingy in choosing accompanying copy. Most papers that chose milder photos, in fact, did a more thorough job of backgrounding the story.

---

[3] Note that Baker's 1988 study of the Dwyer suicide found no significant correlation between market competition and the graphic content of the photos chosen by editors.

DECISIONS ON USE OF THE MARINOVICH PHOTOS. Of 57 newspapers surveyed, 24 ran either the burning or the equally shocking stabbing, in which an assailant plunges a blade into the victim's forehead with calculating precision.[4] Seventeen avoided the most violent photos, running shots instead of the victim being led away from the railroad station, dragged down the street or pelted with stones. Sixteen newspapers ran none of the Marinovich photos (tables 1 and 2).

The burning photo, which was used 22 times overall, was also the consensus front-page choice (figures 3 and 4). Of nine papers that used Marinovich photos on Page A1, eight used the burning and one the stabbing.[5] With only 10 uses overall, the stabbing photo stood at the other extreme from "burn," with several editors saying they had specifically rejected the shot as the most extreme of the series. "It showed violence and animalistic hatred," Miami's Lyskowski said. Former Oakland Tribune vice-president Leroy Aarons, chairman of the Pulitzer spot news nominating panel, said he probably also would have decided to run the burning but not the stabbing: "I found that it was almost unbearably repulsive to see a knife penetrating the scalp of an individual."

The Daily News' Jarvis rejected both the stabbing and burning. He noted, however, that burning, somehow sanitized by Buddhist monks and napalm, was less shocking than the stabbing. "I remember immolation pictures from the Vietnam era. That's not as unusual an image as that knife sticking right out of the skull."

---

[4] The six photos that were transmitted showed 1) the man being led away from the train station; then being 2) beaten and stoned; 3) harassed, slapped and shoved; 4) dragged down the street; 5) stabbed; and 6) burned. In table 2 and the figures, photos 2 and 3, which were essentially indistinguishable in their cutline descriptions, are tabulated together.

[5] The South Africa story started on Page A1 at 13 papers. Eight used the burning, one the stabbing. One started on the front with copy and jumped inside to the burning and another photo. The remaining three ran copy with no art or staff-produced art.

At the St. Paul Pioneer Press, however, the stabbing was chosen for front-page color as the more arresting image. "I look at the moment that the photo freezes on film," said news editor Joe Sevick. "Rarely do you see a photo where a knife is about to go into somebody."

Fifteen newspapers chose series of from two to five shots. Albany Times Union Managing Editor Dan Lynch approved stacking the central four photos down the left margin of the front page. Denver's Rocky Mountain News also decided on a series, but editors' only open page was deep in the paper — Page 170. A Page-3 box, showing the photo of the man being dragged, referred News readers to the story, warning that the photographs were "horrific and disturbing."

The strategies used to group photos are revealing (figure 5). After "burn," which was used in all 15 series, the next most popular shot, with 10 uses, was "lead." One of the mildest of the group, the shot worked well to advance the story line while relieving the intense tension of the stronger graphics. Next in series use, despite its seeming unpopularity, was the stabbing, with nine uses. Significantly, "stab," for many the most difficult shot in the Soweto collection, was used only twice as a stand-alone photo. Editors may have felt that it was too strong to be used without the context set by other images.

PAPER-BY-PAPER DECISIONS. Although the Soweto series cleared on Saturday night, Miami Herald editors sent the photo of flames licking around the victim's hunched body to Executive Editor Janet Chusmir's home for her approval. At her direction, the immolation picture ran on the front page, but below the fold and in black and white. The detail revealed in the color reproduction, Graphics Editor Lyskowski agreed, was too graphic. At the Los Angeles Times and Dallas Morning News, however, the same shot ran above the front-page fold — and in color.

New York City's four major dailies all ran photo stories. The Post, which has no Sunday edition, assembled a Monday package that accompanied the dragging, stabbing and burning photos with Sunday reaction to the government crackdown (Cohen 1990, 16 September). The Times and Newsday both chose the burning picture. The Daily News ran the stoning photo along with Cohen's "Another Day" story describing the attack.

Chicago's two principal dailies were more conservative: The Sun Times (careful of its reputation, one editor said, because it is a tabloid and "we used to be owned by Rupert Murdoch") chose perhaps the most innocuous shot of the series, that of the victim being led away from the train station. The Tribune used none of the Soweto photos.

"We didn't feel it was necessary to show step-by-step how one man met his end," said Karen Engstrom, picture editor at the Tribune. "It just went on and on and on in detail and it was more than clear that the man was going through a great deal and we didn't even think the public would appreciate it."

THE BREAKFAST AND OTHER TESTS. Editors who decided not to run the Marinovich photos, or who chose one of the milder shots, offered similar explanations: "Too strong, too grisly, too gruesome, even for an inside page" was the verdict at the Sacramento Bee. "While we don't shrink from running certain body pictures," ombudsman Art Nauman said, "this was beyond the bounds of acceptability to our readers." The Bee ran none of the Soweto photos.

Some editors said their bosses subscribe to the subjective "breakfast test." "The question is, 'Which of those photos would help tell the story without ruining everyone's breakfast?'" said Rod Deckert, managing editor of the Albuquerque Journal, which used one of the less offensive shots. Ken Irby, deputy picture editor at Newsday, said the Long Island paper tends to de-emphasize disturbing material on Sundays, instead offering more relaxed, in-depth pieces "that people usually read over the coffee table with their kids."

But even many editors who rejected the more brutal pictures said they find the breakfast test irrelevant. "If you're putting out a paper in New York and you don't have something in the paper that's going to cause you some discomfort over breakfast, then you're probably not putting out the full paper you should," said Jeff Jarvis, Sunday editor at the New York Daily News, which used the stoning. "I don't think the breakfast test works for the '90s."

Or, as Minneapolis Star-Tribune photo editor Mike Zerby said, "The standard line is 'we don't bleed on your eggs,' but I think at this particular newspaper we've grown past that."

Michel duCille, director of photography of the Washington Post and member of the Pulitzer spot news nominating panel, wasn't on duty the day the Marinovich photos cleared. He was chagrined later to learn the Post had used one of the less gripping images. "I find that I am very much for 'run it and the reader's breakfast be damned,'" duCille said, advocating what he calls a "situational" breakfast test.

In general, most papers report no firm policies to fall back on when handling disturbing photos. "We had all these rules, we thought. ... You don't run pictures of snakes and toilets and bodies," said Steve Small, St. Petersburg Times photo director. "We discovered that the only rule we have is that we don't have a rule."

Several editors generalized that negative reader reaction is inversely proportional to the distance between them and the event. At the Portland Oregonian, which used both the stabbing and the burning, Photo Director Serge McCabe said that, in deference to victims' relatives or neighbors, body photos are more likely to be used if they are from outside the Oregonian circulation area. Similar policies are reported by Newsday's Irby. In contrast, Deckert said the Albuquerque Journal will often lean toward running a violent staff-produced photo because it would have "a more immediate impact on our readership."

COPY CHOICES. Among papers that used the more graphic Marinovich photos, a pronounced difference emerged between those that ran the photos aggressively — on the front page or in groups — and those that ran the burning as a single photo on an inside page (table 3, figure 5). Editors at the 19 papers in the first group placed the photos in a thorough news context, sometimes as part of a two- or three-story package backgrounding the South African situation, describing the train-station attack itself, and — in four cases — explaining Marinovich's attempt to intervene. Only a handful of papers were in the second group, but the difference was marked. Two included only a brief description of the train-station incident in copy, plus an obligatory reference in the cutline. The remaining two — the New York Times and Denver Post — omitted any reference to the Soweto attack in the accompanying story. The Post cutline simply read: "Violence continues: A boy runs away as an ANC supporter clubs a Zulu foe who was beaten, stabbed and set ablaze." The Times cutline was similar: "In Soweto yesterday, blacks described as African National Congress supporters burned to death a man they accused of being a Zulu Inkatha supporter. He was stabbed and beaten before being set on fire."

Table 3 shows all 57 papers scored on a five-point scale for aggressiveness in photo display, with a score of 5.0 representing use of either "burn" or "stab" on the front page or in a series. Each paper is also scored on the thoroughness of the copy chosen to accompany the photos, with 5.0 reflecting use of stories both on the government crackdown and the Soweto attack, along with an explanation of Marinovich's attempt to intervene. A score of .50 reflects use of only the crackdown story, with specific reference to the train-station incident deleted. In this analysis, newspapers choosing the most dramatic photo presentation also scored the highest for thoroughness of copy.

with scores of 3.33 and 2.66 for the top two groups. The lowest score for copy relevance, 1.38, went to the four papers that ran either "stab" or "burn" on an inside page.

Editors had several choices of copy available, including a basic story, provided by several services, about the South African government's "iron-fist" crackdown on black-on-black violence.[6] The AP story on the crackdown included a one-sentence report that AP staffers had witnessed an unarmed black being stoned, stabbed and then burned to death at the Soweto train station (Cohen 1990, "New anti-violence measures," 15 September). A second AP story described the attack in detail (Cohen 1990, "Another Day," 15 September). Several papers preceded the account with an editor's note placing the killing in the larger context:

> Almost 800 people have died in black factional fighting in townships around Johannesburg since early August. ... Here is a firsthand account of one of the deaths (Newsday, 16 September 1990, p. 06).

Finally, AP also provided the photo advisory on Marinovich's attempt to intervene. The Charlotte Observer incorporated the additional material in an expanded cutline:

> These pictures were taken by free-lance photographer Sebastian Balic, who was covering a minor clash at a railway station when the attack began. Realizing the man was in great danger, Balic repeatedly asked the attackers to stop.
>
> The men ordered Balic to stop taking pictures several times. He said he would stop taking pictures if they left the man alone, hoping that they would stop, but they ignored him. It was impossible for Balic to stop the attack without putting his own life at risk (16 September 1990, 2A).

Although 41 papers used at least one of the Marinovich photos, only three in addition to Charlotte — Akron, the Rocky Mountain News and USA Today — told the story of Marinovich's attempt to halt the attack. "I wanted to make sure we got the photographer's story in there as well," said Mike Madigan, managing editor of Denver's News.

---

[6] Among others, United Press International, Knight Ridder, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Baltimore Sun and Reuters.

At many papers, news editors said they never saw the advisory about Marinovich. A few editors, however, saw it and decided not to use it. "Basically, I'd say we attempted to not deal with the whole concept of the news media as the news maker," said Harry Saltsgaver, news editor for the Greeley (Colo.) Daily Tribune, which ran the stoning photo.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT. Among the collateral considerations at many news desks was the coverage of South African troubles that had gone before. Within the week preceding the Soweto incident, the Longmont (Colo.) Daily Times Call had run other beating and killing photographs from South Africa, weekend editor Rod Gerlach said. Almost daily, AP had moved photos of terrific violence. The photos were "just too — too much."

The photo editor on duty that Saturday at the Seattle Times, Dean Rutz, questioned the photos' story-telling value and did not run them. "The picture didn't have any depth; it wasn't very concise in giving you any explanation of inter-tribal politics," he said. "These photos not only lack clarity; they don't give clarity, either. ... You don't have a sense of right or wrong. You just have straight violence."

Another view came from the Denver Post's Isabel Spencer, who wanted to make readers focus on the South Africa situation. "The world is turning its back. ... Once you get the perception that 'uncivilized' people are doing it to other 'uncivilized people,' then people just walk away." Even if the only photo available to tell the story had been the stabbing, which Spencer had rejected as too tough, "I would not have much listened to anybody. ... I would have run that one."

THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. At several newspapers, photo editors said they often don't even try to submit graphic violence for higher editors' consideration. The Soweto photos, however, generally made it at least to the news desk for approval or rejection. Often, judgment was swift: "The editors at that point said no," one picture editor reported, "they would not take the heat."

At the Rocky Mountain News, Madigan credits the entire newsroom with helping find ways to present the photographs effectively. "Just one word or the other can make a terrific difference in whether the public starts screaming 'sensationalize,' or takes it as a thoughtful, important piece of work," he said. The News package was carefully crafted to place the photos clearly in context. First, the refer box on Page 3 warned readers that they'd encounter the photos deeper in the paper:

> "In Soweto, a photographer pleads to no avail with a mob that beats, stabs and burns to death a man suspected of being a Zulu spy. The photos are horrific and disturbing."

In addition to the refer, readers were given the Cohen "Another Day" story, the AP "New Anti-violence" summary and a careful editor's note on Marinovich's intervention. The News used four of the photos, including both stabbing and burning.

READER REACTION. The combination of context, positioning and photo choice seems to be the deciding factor in reader response. The devastating photo played inside doesn't stir readers to write as surely as graphic violence on the cover. The Rocky Mountain News reported no reader complaints. The Albany Times Union, which serves what its managers characterize as a conservative readership, received hundreds of phone calls and subscription cancellations. Lynch said later he felt vindicated by the Pulitzer: "We can't edit the paper solely for 7-year-olds," he said. "People should read the paper as adults and they'll be informed of horror as well as Calvin and Hobbs."

Seattle editors, who used none of the Soweto photos, describe their readers as "very conservative." "They're liberal politically," said Nelson, "but they generally don't want to be treated to severe brutality." Rutz speculates, in fact, that Seattle readers find violent pictures particularly traumatic because the Times has always avoided pictures of bodies. "We've always spared them from that."

Replying to letter-writing critics, the Miami Herald said the burning photo's social value outweighed the distaste readers might feel. "We are the shapers of public opinion," Lyskowski said later. "If we can force the reader to form an opinion about something, that's half the battle." In Portland, McCabe says "we have to use some of those photos sometime or else nothing ever changes." The war in Vietnam, he contends, really didn't start drawing to an end "until those images started coming in and they realized what was going on."

Discussion

Many standards to help decide whether a photograph will make it into the morning paper. As this survey makes clear, the criteria for publication are as different as individual editors and the newspapers themselves. There are few, if any written policies, but there is an active folklore. Newspapers seem to fall into two camps: a minority that will not use graphic violence — and those that will at least talk about it. In the first group, photo editors consistently weed out photos that flunk the sensitivity tests, photos they know it would be a waste of time to submit for higher editors' consideration. Some support the policy or are resigned to tit. Others express anger at being forced to do this screening,. A few continue to test the system, urging exceptions for shots that make a strong statements.

"Talking about it" is very important to the majority group. The only rule is that it's worth a discussion; few if any mainstream dailies have expressed policies of seeking shocking art. But here a picture's advocates are permitted to make thecase that the significance of the shot outweighs any offense it might offer.

There's an interesting difference here between the worlds of television and print. Studying TV coverage of the Budd Dwyer suicide, Parsons and Smith found that broadcast journalists had accepted "relatively detailed conventions for dealing with events involving graphic depictions of death" (1988, 84). In application, these conventions yielded remarkable uniformity in deadline decisions at 19 Pennsylvania television stations.

No similar consensus is seen, however, in newspaper editors' decisions on the Soweto photographs. Only 42 percent — 24 of the 57 papers studied — chose to show readers either of the two more dramatic photos in the Marinovich series. Another 30 percent used milder shots from the series; 28 percent ran none at all. Although basic attitudes toward graphic violence did not vary widely among the papers in the "let's talk about it" group, significant differences emerged as those attitudes were translated into decision.

NEWS CONTEXT. The most dramatic variation came in editors' efforts to provide relevant context for the powerful images. Some gave the package cursory, almost off-handed treatment, seeming more interested in the "gee-whiz" rarity of the scene than in human and political significance. Others, however, succeeded in assembling packages that could both provoke and inform, while sharing with readers some of the human dilemma the photographer faced at the scene. The most heartening finding was that the most thorough substantive treatment came from the editors who chose the most dramatic photos and the most aggressive play. Far from hiding the images in the back of the book, they ran them assertively, thoughtfully and without embarrassment.

Other editors, of course chose not to run the Marinovich photos at all. To some, the story lacked thematic clarity. This was not the neat drama of a black man being attacked by white defenders of apartheid, nor did the photos clarify — in fact they may have confused — the murky story of factional rivalry between tribes. The victim was a nobody, identified only by his attackers' suspicions, not a known political leader.

Other editors, however, supplied the missing context by introducing the photos or Cohen's narration as a firsthand account on one of 800 deaths due to the factional fighting. The Los Angeles Times backs off from high-impact photos only if the context is weak, as it was in the Budd Dwyer suicide, Assistant Managing Editor Terry

Schwadron said. The Soweto photos, he added, were directly on the point of the news story.

The *Rocky Mountain News* presentation of the Soweto photos offers almost a textbook case in thoughtful editing. "If we weren't concerned about the breakfast test," Madigan said, "we would have run [the story] on Page 1 or 2 or 3." The Page 3 caution was important, too. First, Madigan didn't want the story to go unnoticed in the back. Second, he equated the caution with a TV-news disclaimer. "It may help set the reader up for them a little bit," he said. "Over Sunday breakfast, you may not want to look at something like that."

This quest for context, for the line of moderation, has two aspects. First, there is a need for substantive content. Is there enough information? Does this story or picture add to the reader's understanding of the event or issue? Did the story and photos work together? "I would find it objectionable to splash it in color on 1A and then refer it inside," said the *Star-Tribune's* Zerby. "I think that's pretty sensationalistic."

Second, there is a need for appropriate presentation. Are the images treated respectfully? Are readers' sensitivities acknowledged? Are layout resources used appropriately: Will color enhance or sensationalize the image? Is Page 1 placement justified by the merits of the story, not just by the drama of the image? Many editors who abjure the breakfast test elsewhere apply it on Page 1. The *St. Petersburg Times* ran the Soweto burning on A25, Small noted. "It wasn't on Page 1 of our paper. That's true," he said. "I'm very fond of saying that there's a place in our newspaper for any relevant statement that has to be made."

COMMUNICATING THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S ROLE. One way editors can show respect for readers is to share the details and dilemmas of newsgathering. With background can come understanding. Although AP's explanation of Marinovich's attempt to intervene ran on the photo wire, it apparently did not always reach the copy desk. As a result, only four papers carried copy answering legitimate ethical questions readers could have raised about the role the photographer might have played in stopping — or intensifying — the attack.

RELEVANCE OF VIOLENCE. Did this story need photographs or were they gratuitous violence? "The fact that it was caught on film was extraordinary," said Rutz, "but it's been described in print and shown in the past. Does it take the story any further ... or is it just gruesome and grisly?" Other editors worried about their application of the distance test, asking if it was not a form of sensationalism, or hypocrisy, to run photos only when there was no risk of them being seen by someone involved. If there's merit in the picture, they suggest, it should be even more meritorious at home.

The Daily News' Jarvis disputes the utilitarian argument that violence must sometimes be shown to help readers understand reality: "If you try to portray the evil you will inevitably come up short and thus you will trivialize the evil to an extent," he said. "Whether it's images of the Holocaust or whether it's images of South Africa, if you become desensitized to it, it becomes less important and that trivializes it."

Editors show justified caution in assessing what level of violence readers will tolerate. Those who have fielded phones after a bombshell mistake are especially wary; they have acquired a healthy respect for reader tolerances. But it is heartening to hear editors speak of their responsibility to present unpleasant facts and pictures — to show that there is cruelty in the world — and their belief readers will accept material that is presented thoughtfully and with consideration.

To this end, it is critical to place dramatic photos in a full news context. Merely running a powerful image, without sharing what one knows of its significance, is the essence of sensationalism. People who cared about the Soweto story took care to tell it well. The most pervasive pattern identified by this survey was that editors who gave aggressive play to dramatic photos were correspondingly careful to place the graphics in the most relevant and appropriate news context possible.

It is important that we learn more about how readers react to various combinations of text and photos that might accompany a controversial story. An interesting next step would be to conduct a systematic comparison of any photo controversy, measuring the relationship between context and reader acceptance. We need a surer sense of what factors cause trouble and what factors evoke respect. Most important, we need to know if readers who see that their newspaper worries about what they think are more inclined to trust editors' good intentions.

Paper	Marinovich photos used	S'rce	Page	Which story	Comments
Akron (OH) Beacon Journal	4-lead, beat, stab, burn	VT	A14	AP Iron Fist w/ incident; photog cutline	
Albany Times Union	5-lead, drag, stab, burn(A1); harass(A4)	Clip	A1, A4	UPI Iron Fist, no incident; Attack	4 in A1 strip; stories, harass"A4
Albuquerque Journal	1-drag	Clip	A7	AP Iron Fist w/incident; Attack	
Atlanta Constitution	1-"attacked"	VT	A4	AP Iron Fist w/incident	
Atlantic City Press	3-drag, stab, burn	VT	A17	AP Iron Fist w/incident	
Austin American-Statesman	1-drag	DT	A2	KR Iron Fist, no incident	
Bloomington (Ill) Pantagraph	none	DT	A1	NYT Iron Fist, no incident	
Boston Globe	1-lead	Clip/VT	A2	AP Iron Fist w/incident	
Boulder (CO) Daily Camera	2-lead, burn	Clip	A5	AP Iron Fist w/incident; Attack	
Charlotte Observer	4-lead, drag, stab, burn	VT	A1, A2	Attack; extended photog cutline	A1 burn; rest on A2
Chicago Sun Times	1-lead	DT	34 (tab)	LAT Iron Fist w/incident insert	
Chicago Tribune	none-Mandela mug	DT/VT	Zone C-p. 3	Combo Iron Fist, no incident	
Cincinnati Enquirer	1-harass	DT	A6	BSun Iron Fist, no incident; Attack	
Colo. Sp. Gazette Telegraph	3-lead, beat, burn	Clip	A3	AP Iron Fist w/incident; Attack	
Columbia (SC) State	1-drag	VT	A2	WPost Iron Fist, no incident	
Dallas Morning News	4-burn (1A); lead, beat, ? inside	DT	A1, A20-21	KR Iron Fist, no incident; Attack	A1 burn; rest on A20-21
Denver Post	1-burn	Clip	A2	AP Iron Fist, incident deleted	
Denver Rocky Mtn News	4-lead, drag, stab, burn	Clip	3, refer 170	AP w/incident; Attack; photog cutline	Drag in p. 3 refer; rest on 170
Edmonton Journal	2-lead (1A); stab inside	DT	A1, refer A5	Reuters Iron Fist, no incident; Attack	Lead in A1 refer; story, stab A5
Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel	none-Mandela mug	VT	A14	NYT Iron fist, no incident	
Fresno Bee	none	VT	A11	NYT Iron fist, no incident; Attack	
Greeley (CO) Tribune	1-stoning	Clip	A12	AP Iron Fist w/incident	
Harrisburg (PA) Patriot News	none	DT	A3	AP Iron Fist w/incident	
Houston Chronicle	1-lead	DT	A29	NYT Iron Fist; Attack	
Houston Post	none	VT	A3	AP Iron Fist w/incident	
Lexington Herald-Leader	1-lead	VT	A10	NYT Iron Fist, no incident	
Longmont (CO) Times-Call	none	Clip	na	none	
Los Angeles Daily News	none-Mandela mug	DT/VT	1-US/World	KR Iron Fist, no incident	
Los Angeles Times	1-burn (color)	Clip/N	A1-top center	Staff Iron Fist, no incident	Burn in A1 refer; story A5
Louisville Courier-Journal	none	DT	A19	BSun Iron Fist w/ incident insert	
Memphis Commercial Appeal	none	VT	A2	AP Iron Fist w/incident	
Miami Herald	1-burn	Clip/VT	A1, refer A15	Combo Iron Fist w/incident	Burn in A1 refer; story A15
Minneapolis Star-Tribune	4-drag, beat, stab, burn	DT	A19 art, A11	19-photos w/ Attack; 11-Iron Fist w/inc'nt	
Montreal Gazette	1-burn	DT	A1, B1	A1-photo w/Attack; B1-KR Iron Fist	
New Orleans Times-Picayune	none	VT	A26	AP Iron Fist w/incident; Attack	
New York Daily News	1-stoning	Library	16 (tab)	Attack	
New York Post	3-drag, stab, burn	Clip	13 (tab)	Zulu King	Mon., Sept. 17 (no Sunday ed.)
New York Times	1-burn	Clip/N	A3	Staff Iron Fist, no incident	

Table 1 — NEWSPAPER USE OF SOWETO PHOTOS

Newsday (Long Island)	2-drag, burn	VT	6 art, 15 (tab)	6-Attack; 15-Staff Iron Fist, no incident	
Orange County Register	1-beat	DT	A29	KR Iron Fist, no incident	
Orlando Sentinel	1-drag	VT	A3	Attack	
Philadelphia Inquirer	1-lead	VT	A3	Staff Iron Fist, no incident	
Phoenix Arizona Republic	1-lead	DT/VT	A11	AP Iron Fist, incident deleted; Attack	
Pittsburgh Press	1-burn	VT	A1	AP Iron Fist, incident deleted; Attack	
Portland Oregonian	2-lead, burn	VT	A1, A12 art	KR Iron Fist	Story starts A1; Photos on A12
Sacramento Bee	none	VT	A17	NYT Iron fist, no incident; Attack	
Saint Louis Post-Dispatch	unrelated staff photos	VT	A1, A3 art	A3-combo Iron Fist w/incident	A1-staff analysis; staff art
Saint Paul Pioneer Press	1-stab	DT/VT	A1	NYT Iron Fist, no incident; Attack	
Saint Petersburg Times	1-burn	VT	A25	Attack	
San Antonio Light	none	DT	A3	AP Iron Fist w/incident	
San Diego Union and Tribune	4-lead, stone, drag, burn	DT	A2	NYT/UPI Iron Fist, no incident	
San Francisco Examiner	none	DT/VT	A1	UPI Iron Fist w/ incident insert	
San Jose Mercury News	1-lead	VT	A16	KR/BSun Iron Fist, no incident	
Seattle Times/Post Int'gencer	none	VT	A2	LAT Iron Fist, no incident	
Tulsa World	1-burn	DT	A9	AP Iron Fist w/incident	
USA Today	2-stab, burn	N/DT	A4	Long cutline: Attack with photog note	Mon., Sept. 17 (no Sunday ed.)
Washington Post	1-lead	N/VT	A18	Staff Iron Fist, no incident	

Table 1 — NEWSPAPER USE OF SOWETO PHOTOS

KEY: I-Photo ran on inside page
F-Photo ran on front page
T-Total images

Number of photos used, by image and group

	TOTAL USES	USED IN GROUPS OF 1	USED IN GROUPS OF 2	USED IN GROUPS OF 3	USED IN GRPS OF 4-5	TOTAL IMAGES
Lead	I-16 F-2 T-18	I-8 F-0 T-8	I-2 F-1 T-3	I-1 F-0 T-1	I-5 F-1 T-6	T-18
Beat, stone, harass[1]	I-12 F-0 T-12	I-5 F-0 T-5	I-0 F-0 T-0	I-1 F-0 T-1	I-6 F-0 T-5	T-12
Drag	I-11 F-1 T-12	I-4 F-0 T-4	I-1 F-0 T-1	I-2 F-0 T-2	I-4 F-1 T-5	T-12
Burn	I-15 F-7 T-22	I-4 F-4 T-8	I-4 F-0 T-4	I-3 F-0 T-3	I-4 F-3 T-7	T-22
Stab	I-8 F-2 T-10[2]	I-0 F-1 T-1	I-2 F-0 T-2	I-2 F-0 T-2	I-4 F-1 T-5	T-10
TOTAL IMAGES	T-74					T-74

Number of photos used, by grouping

SINGLE PHOTOS	I-21 F-5 T-26
GROUPS OF 2	I-4 F-1 T-5
GROUPS OF 3	I-4 F-0 T-4
GROUPS OF 4	I-3 F-2 T-5[2]
GROUPS OF 5	I-0 F-1 T-1[3]
TOTAL PAPERS USING PHOTOS	T-41[4]

[1] Photos with essentially indistinguishable cutlines describing the man as being beaten, stoned and otherwise harassed are here combined.

[2] Both groups of four started on Page 1 with "burn," jumped to three more photos inside.

[3] Group of five started on A1 with "lead," "drag," "stab" and "burn;" then jumped to "harass" inside.

[4] Thirteen newspapers carried South Africa stories on the front. Of those, nine included Marinovich art:

- Four started multiple-photo packages on A1;
- Five ran single photos on A1;
- Two ran copy only, no art;
- One ran copy on A1, art inside;
- One ran staff art and story, unrelated to Soweto incident.

Table 2 — PLACEMENT OF SEPARATE IMAGES

Paper	Marinovich photos used	Page	Image use	Copy used	Copy score
Albany Times Union	5-lead, drag, stab, burn(A1); harass(A4)	A1, A4	5	UPI Iron Fist, no incident; Attack	3.00
Charlotte Observer	4-lead, drag, stab, burn	A1, A2	5	Attack; extended photog cutline	4.00
Dallas Morning News	4-burn (1A); lead, beat, ? inside	A1, A20-21	5	KR Iron Fist, no incident; Attack	3.00
				Group 5 average	**3.33**
Akron (OH) Beacon Journal	4-lead, beat, stab, burn	A14	4	AP Iron Fist w/ incident; photog cutline	4.00
Atlantic City Press	3-drag, stab, burn	A17	4	AP Iron Fist w/incident	2.00
Colo. Sp. Gazette Telegraph	3-lead, beat, burn	A3	4	AP Iron Fist w/incident; Attack	3.00
Denver Rocky Mtn News	4-lead, drag, stab, burn	3, refer 170	4	AP w/incident; Attack; photog cutline	5.00
Edmonton Journal	2-lead (1A); stab inside	A1, refer A5	4	Reuters Iron Fist, no incident; Attack	3.00
Los Angeles Times	1-burn (color)	A1-top center	4	Staff Iron Fist, no incident	1.00
Miami Herald	1-burn	A1, refer A15	4	Combo Iron Fist w/incident	2.50
Minneapolis Star-Tribune	4-drag, beat, stab, burn	A19 art, A11	4	19-photos w/ Attack; 11-Iron Fist w/inc'nt	3.00
Montreal Gazette	1-burn	A1, B1	4	A1-photo w/Attack; B1-KR Iron Fist	3.00
New York Post	3-drag, stab, burn	13 (tab)	4	Zulu King	1.00
Newsday (Long Island)	2-drag, burn	6 art, 15 (tab)	4	6-Attack; 15-Staff Iron Fist, no incident	3.00
Pittsburgh Press	1-burn	A1	4	AP Iron Fist, incident deleted; Attack	3.00
Portland Oregonian	2-lead, burn	A1, A12 art	4	KR Iron Fist	1.00
Saint Paul Pioneer Press	1-stab	A1	4	NYT Iron Fist, no incident; Attack	3.00
San Diego Union and Tribune	4-lead, stone, drag, burn	A2	4	NYT/UPI Iron Fist, no incident	1.00
USA Today	2-stab, burn	A4	4	Long cutline: Attack with photog note	4.00
				Group 4 average	**2.66**
Denver Post	1-burn	A2	3	AP Iron Fist, incident deleted	0.50
New York Times	1-burn	A3	3	Staff Iron Fist, no incident	1.00
Saint Petersburg Times	1-burn	A25	3	Attack	2.00
Tulsa World	1-burn	A9	3	AP Iron Fist w/incident	2.00
				Group 3 average	**1.38**
Albuquerque Journal	1-drag	A7	2	AP Iron Fist w/incident; Attack	3.00
Atlanta Constitution	1-"attacked"	A4	2	AP Iron Fist w/incident	2.00
Austin American-Statesman	1-drag	A2	2	KR Iron Fist, no incident	1.00
Boston Globe	1-lead	A2	2	AP Iron Fist w/incident	2.00
Boulder (CO) Daily Camera	2-lead, burn	A5	2	AP Iron Fist w/incident; Attack	3.00
Chicago Sun Times	1-lead	34 (tab)	2	LAT Iron Fist w/incident insert	2.50
Cincinnati Enquirer	1-harass	A6	2	BSun Iron Fist, no incident; Attack	3.00
Columbia (SC) State	1-drag	A2	2	WPost Iron Fist, no incident	1.00
Greeley (CO Tribune	1-stoning	A12	2	AP Iron Fist w/incident	2.00
Houston Chronicle	1-lead	A29	2	NYT Iron Fist; Attack	3.00
Lexington Herald-Leader	1-lead	A10	2	NYT Iron Fist, no incident	1.00
New York Daily News	1-stoning	16 (tab)	2	Attack	2.00

Table 3 — RELATION BETWEEN IMAGE AGGRESSIVENESS AND COPY CONTEXT

Orange County Register	1-beat	A29	2	KR Iron Fist, no incident	1.00
Orlando Sentinel	1-drag	A3	2	Attack	2.00
Philadelphia Inquirer	1-lead	A3	2	Staff Iron Fist, no incident	1.00
Phoenix Arizona Republic	1-lead	A11	2	AP Iron Fist, incident deleted; Attack	3.00
San Jose Mercury News	1-lead	A16	2	KR/BSun Iron Fist, no incident	1.00
Washington Post	1-lead	A18	2	Staff Iron Fist, no incident	1.00
				Group 2 average	1.92
Saint Louis Post-Dispatch	unrelated staff photos	A1, A3 art	1	A3-combo Iron Fist w/incident	2.50
Bloomington (Ill) Pantagraph	none	A1	1	NYT Iron Fist, no incident	1.00
Chicago Tribune	none-Mandela mug	Zone C-p. 3	1	Combo Iron Fist, no incident	1.00
Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel	none-Mandela mug	A14	1	NYT Iron fist, no incident	1.00
Fresno Bee	none	A11	1	NYT Iron fist, no incident; Attack	3.00
Harrisburg (PA) Patriot News	none	A3	1	AP Iron Fist w/incident	2.00
Houston Post	none	A3	1	AP Iron Fist w/incident	2.00
Longmont (CO) Times-Call	none	na	1	none	NA
Los Angeles Daily News	none-Mandela mug	1-US/World	1	KR Iron Fist, no incident	1.00
Louisville Courier-Journal	none	A19	1	BSun Iron Fist w/ incident insert	2.50
Memphis Commercial Appeal	none	A2	1	AP Iron Fist w/incident	2.00
New Orleans Times-Picayune	none	A26	1	AP Iron Fist w/incident; Attack	3.00
Sacramento Bee	none	A17	1	NYT Iron fist, no incident; Attack	3.00
San Antonio Light	none	A3	1	AP Iron Fist w/incident	2.00
San Francisco Examiner	none	A1	1	UPI Iron Fist w/ incident insert	2.50
Seattle Times/Post Int'gencer	none	A2	1	LAT Iron Fist, no incident	1.00
				Group 1 average	1.97

Table 3 — RELATION BETWEEN IMAGE AGGRESSIVENESS AND COPY CONTEXT

170 ■ WORLD & NATION · · · Rocky Mountain News · · Sun., Sept. 16, 199

SOUTH AFRICA: *A country out of control*

Police announce ‘iron fist’ crackdow

Roadblocks, other measures target rampant violence

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Police yesterday announced "iron fist" measures intended to halt the savage street fighting that has killed almost 800 blacks. But the African National Congress called the action too little, too late.

The measures include curfews, roadblocks and the deployment of more police and soldiers in black townships plagued by almost five weeks of violence, Maj. Gen. Gerrit Erasmus said at a news conference.

ANC leader Nelson Mandela has repeatedly called for stronger government action, including use of the military, to quell the unrest.

After meeting Friday with President F.W. de Klerk, Mandela accused the government of instigating the fighting and warned of civil war if it continued.

"Mr. Mandela wants an iron fist — we will give an iron fist," Erasmus said yesterday. "Iron Fist" will be the operation's code name.

He said razor wire would be placed around migrant worker hostels and squatter camps, flashpoints for much of the fighting. Anyone entering or leaving the compounds will be searched for weapons, Erasmus said.

Police vehicles will have machine guns mounted on top to protect officers from attacks by blacks with assault rifles, the official said. Police patrols already carry submachine guns in addition to shotguns.

The government last month sent police and army reinforcements into the townships and imposed emergency regulations. But the violence raged on and has spread into Johannesburg.

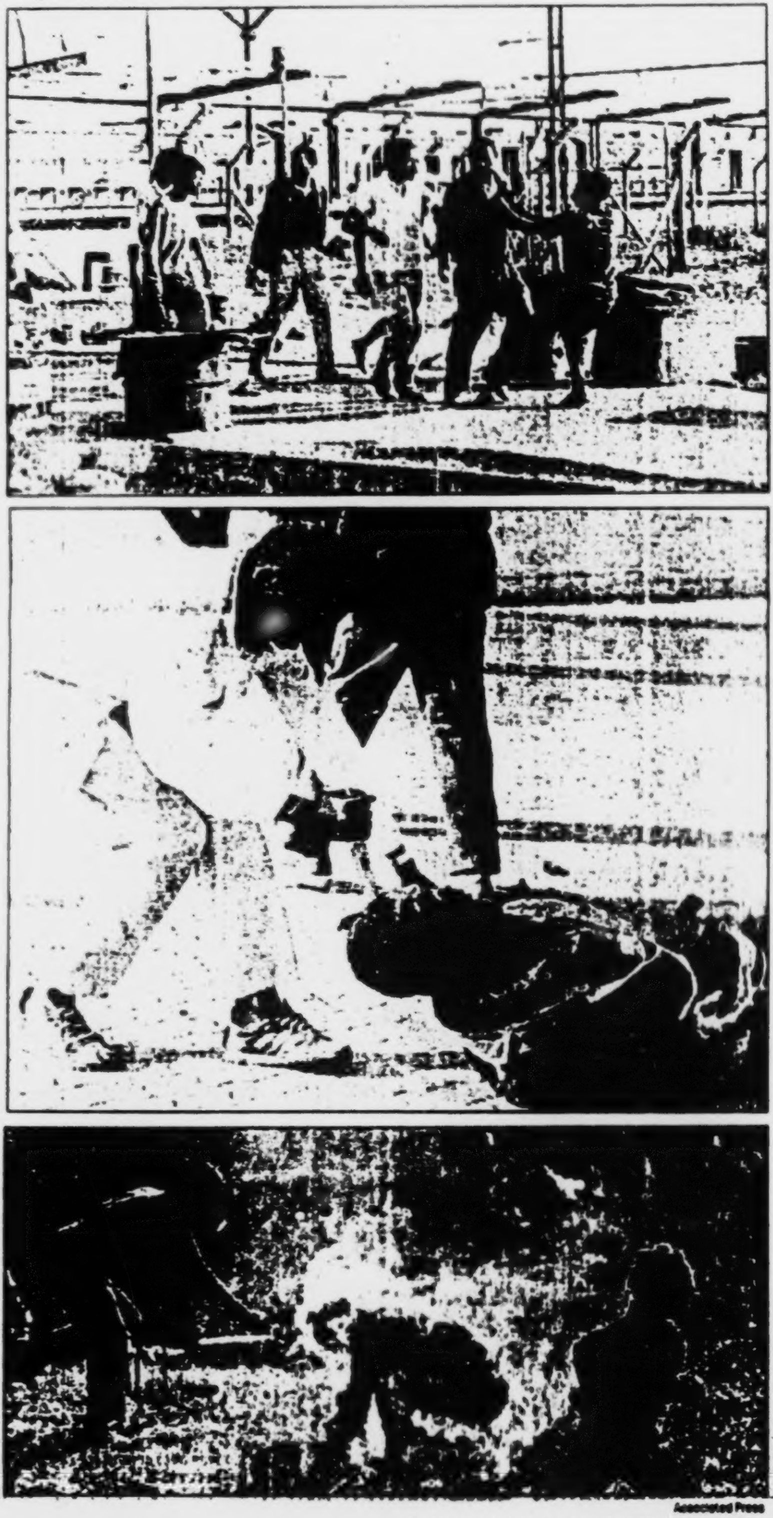
Almost all the fighting occurs at night, when there are virtually no police patrols in the townships. The main combatants are Zulus loyal to the conservative Inkatha movement and Xhosas and other blacks who support Mandela's ANC.

Police said yesterday the townships were quiet. However, observers witnessed one unarmed black being stoned, stabbed and then burned to death at a train station in Soweto yesterday morning.

Mandela told a news conference later yesterday he believed the new police measures would be "totally ineffective."

He noted more than 700 blacks had been killed in the fighting since Aug. 12, but the new measures came after attacks in recent days that killed several police officers, including two whites.

"If these two policemen had not died, I can assure you, the government would not have come out with these measure," Mandela said.



Sequence of a murder

Associated Press

His answers were wrong, so they beat, cut and burned him

Associated Press

SOWETO, South Africa — The sun rose brightly in Soweto yesterday, shining through the smoky haze. People walked along the roads and swept their red dirt yards. Dogs scampered through piles of garbage.

At Inhlazane train station, a man would die soon.

Shortly after dawn, groups of residents milled about on one side of the train platform. They pointed at a small crowd of blacks who live in a nearby migrant workers hostel on the other side of the tracks.

The station formed a 150-yard barrier between them. When trains arrived, people getting off crouched low and scurried across the platform and tracks, using the coaches as a shield.

Someone fired a handgun. Everyone ducked.

Robin Oupa, 36, said he was supposed to go to work at a h tal. "Right now, I can't eve the (train) terminal," he said.

On the platform, a group of men armed with machetes and crude spears questioned people getting off a train. Suddenly, they began pushing a large man in a blue worksuit down the stairs toward the street.

The man resisted but did not fight. More people joined the shouting crowd.

Attackers kicked the man, then hit him with fist-size stones. Several plunged small daggers into his head, back and chest.

They kicked him down, and some hurled boulders the size of anvils at his head.

He continued to crawl. More rocks hit him, and he collapsed. Someone poured gasoline on him.

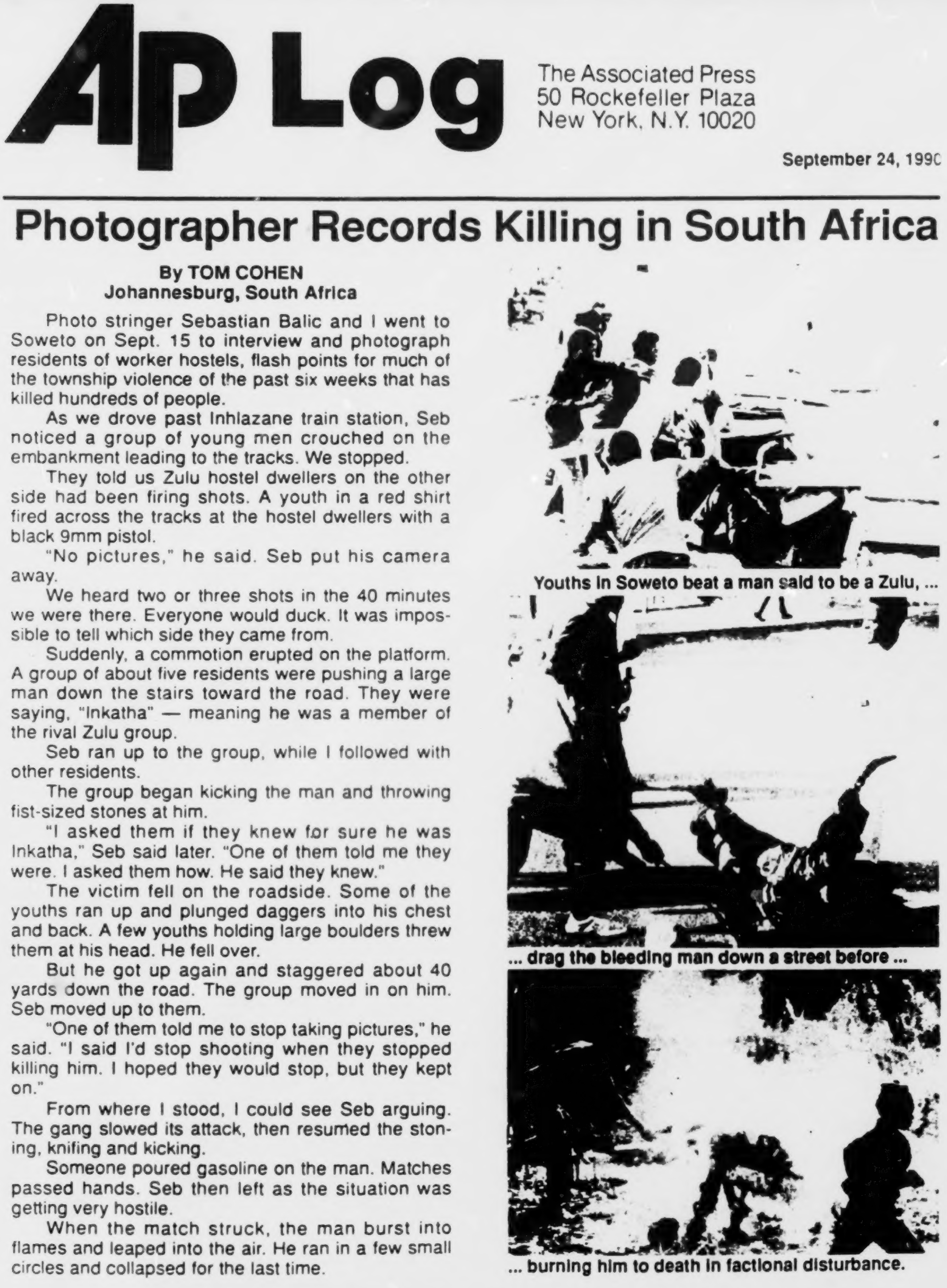
When the match struck, he burst into flames and leaped in the air. Onlookers yelled what sounded like a cheer. A woman danced.

He ran in circles before falling for the last time. A youth hacked at his head with a machete.

Some attackers said the man had failed to answer their questions correctly. They said he was a Zulu spy from the hostel dwellers on the other side of the tracks.

These photographs were taken by 27-year-old freelancer Se tian Balic. The assailants ordered Balic to stop taking pho several times during the incident. He said he would stop taking photos if they left the man alone, hoping that they would stop. Balic could not stop the attack without putting his life at risk.

Figure 1 — ROCKY MTN NEWS WITH LEAD, STAB AND BURN PHOTOS



Ap Log

The Associated Press
50 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10020

September 24, 1990

Photographer Records Killing in South Africa

By TOM COHEN
Johannesburg, South Africa

Photo stringer Sebastian Balic and I went to Soweto on Sept. 15 to interview and photograph residents of worker hostels, flash points for much of the township violence of the past six weeks that has killed hundreds of people.

As we drove past Inhlazane train station, Seb noticed a group of young men crouched on the embankment leading to the tracks. We stopped.

They told us Zulu hostel dwellers on the other side had been firing shots. A youth in a red shirt fired across the tracks at the hostel dwellers with a black 9mm pistol.

"No pictures," he said. Seb put his camera away.

We heard two or three shots in the 40 minutes we were there. Everyone would duck. It was impossible to tell which side they came from.

Suddenly, a commotion erupted on the platform. A group of about five residents were pushing a large man down the stairs toward the road. They were saying, "Inkatha" — meaning he was a member of the rival Zulu group.

Seb ran up to the group, while I followed with other residents.

The group began kicking the man and throwing fist-sized stones at him.

"I asked them if they knew for sure he was Inkatha," Seb said later. "One of them told me they were. I asked them how. He said they knew."

The victim fell on the roadside. Some of the youths ran up and plunged daggers into his chest and back. A few youths holding large boulders threw them at his head. He fell over.

But he got up again and staggered about 40 yards down the road. The group moved in on him. Seb moved up to them.

"One of them told me to stop taking pictures," he said. "I said I'd stop shooting when they stopped killing him. I hoped they would stop, but they kept on."

From where I stood, I could see Seb arguing. The gang slowed its attack, then resumed the stoning, knifing and kicking.

Someone poured gasoline on the man. Matches passed hands. Seb then left as the situation was getting very hostile.

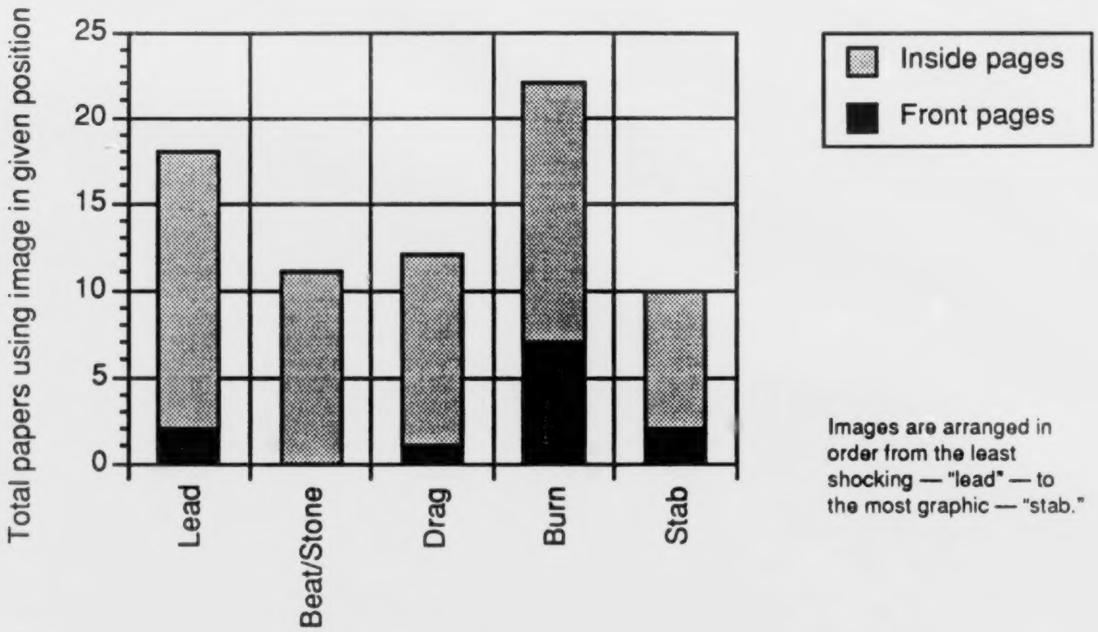
When the match struck, the man burst into flames and leaped into the air. He ran in a few small circles and collapsed for the last time.

Youths in Soweto beat a man said to be a Zulu, ...

... drag the bleeding man down a street before ...

... burning him to death in factional disturbance.

Figure 2 — AP LOG WITH BEAT/STONE, DRAG AND BURN PHOTOS



Images are arranged in order from the least shocking — "lead" — to the most graphic — "stab."

Figure 3 — Total uses of Soweto images, by placement

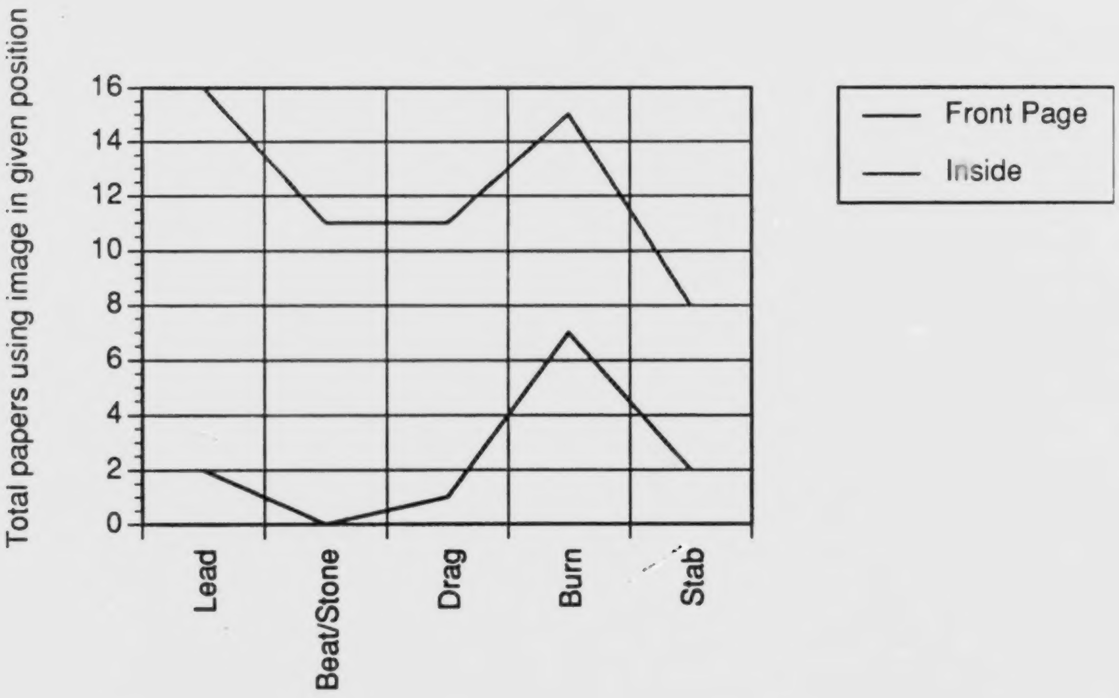


Figure 4 — Placement of separate Soweto images

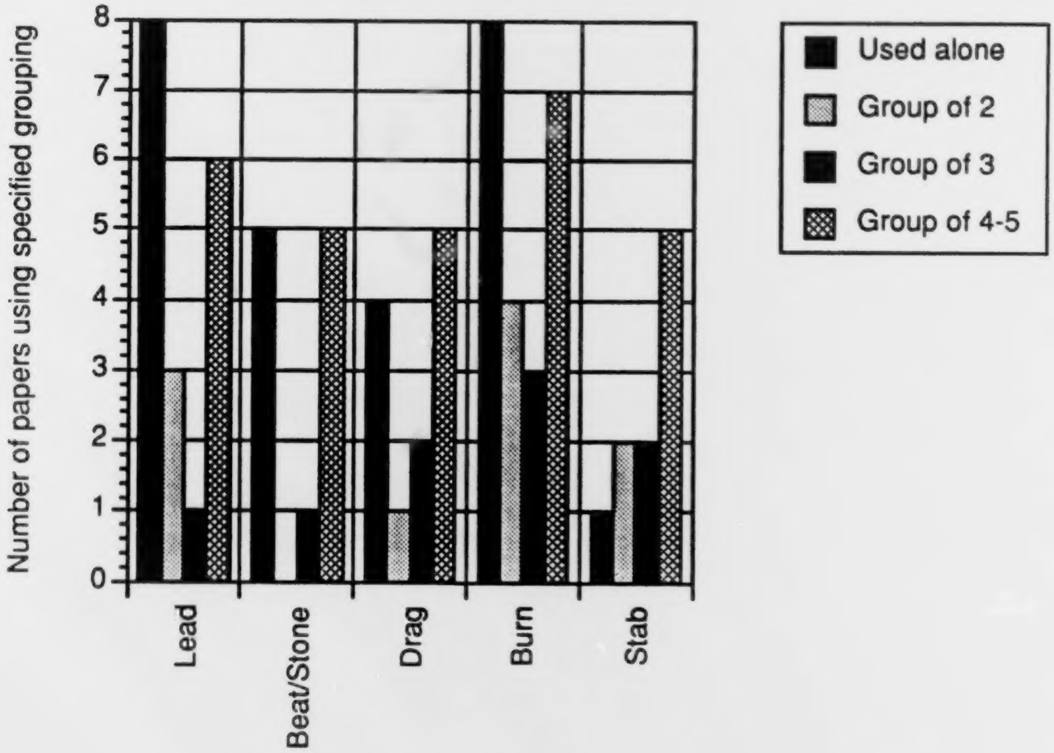
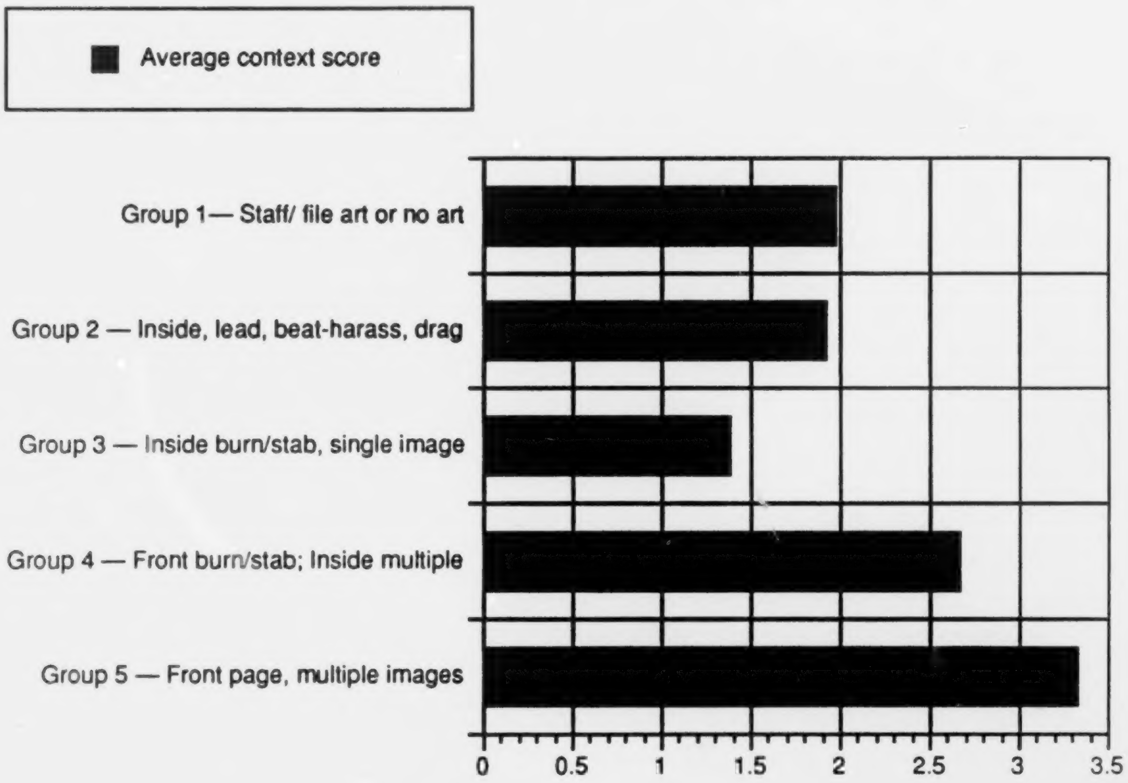


Figure 5 — Distribution of single or group presentation



Values used to code photo packages:

5 — Multiple images (including stab or burn) on front page.
4 — Multiple images (including stab or burn) start on front, refer inside.
3 — Single image (burn or stab), inside.
2 — Single image (lead, beat/stab, harass, drag), inside.
1 — File or staff art, no art.

Values used to code copy packages:

5 — Package includes attack and iron fist stories; photographer role explained.
4 — Package includes attack or iron fist (with incident); photgrapher role explained.
3 — Package includes iron fist with either incident insert or separate attack story.
2 — Package includes attack alone or iron fist with incident.
1 — Package uses wire copy with no explanation of Soweto incident.
.5 — Package based on AP iron fist, with incident explanation deleted.

Figure 6 —Strength of photos correlated with thoroughness of accompanying copy

Reference list

AP's Pulitzer winner: Photos capture man's death in South Africa. 1991. AP Log, 15 April, 1-2.

Bailey, George A. and Lawrence W. Lichty. 1972. Rough justice on a Saigon street: A gatekeeper study of NBC's Tet execution film. Journalism Quarterly 49: 221-29.

Baker, Robert L. 1988. Portraits of a public suicide: Photo treatment by selected Pennsylvania dailies. Newspaper Research Journal 9 (4): 13-23.

A bonze's self-immolation and photo judgment. 1963. Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1 September, 11-13, quoted in John L. Hulteng. 1985. The messenger's motives. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 56.

Brown, Jennifer E. 1987. News photographs and the pornography of grief. Journal of Mass Media Ethics 2 (2): 75-81.

Bryant, Garry. 1987. 10-50 p.i.: Emotion and the photographer. Journal of Mass Media Ethics 2 (2): 32-39.

Carmody, Dierdre. 1978. Pulitzer photos from Rhodesia are now subject of controversy. New York Times, 22 April, p. 5.

Christians, Clifford G., Kim B. Rotzoll, and Mark Fackler. 1991. Media ethics: Cases and Moral Reasoning. 3rd ed. New York: Longman.

Cohen, Tom 1990. Another day, another death in Soweto. Associated Press, 15 September.

________. 1990. New anti-violence measures announced; ANC says it's not enough. Associated Press, 15 September.

________. 1990. Zulu, Xhosa leaders make joint call for peace. Associated Press, 16 September.

________. 1990. Photographer records killing in South Africa. AP Log, 24 September, 1.

Costa, J., L.B. Walton, and B. Roberts. 1963. Get the picture or act the Samaritan? Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, no. 465 (1 June), 5-7.

Cunningham, Richard P. 1989. A photographer defines boundaries: Defusing potential protests. Quill, November, 9-10.

Elliott, Deni. 1990. As life passes by: A journalist's role: Watch and wait. FineLine, October, 2.

Finberg, Howard I., and Bruce D. Itule. 1990. Visual editing: A graphic guide for journalists. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth.

Fink, Conrad C. 1988. Media Ethics: In the newsroom and beyond. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Friendly, Jonathan. 1983. Debate by editors centers on photo. The New York Times. 12 May, A-15.

Fulton, Marianne. 1988. Eyes of Time: Photojournalism in America. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., a New York Graphic Society Book.

Goodwin, H. Eugene. 1987. Groping for ethics in journalism. 2d ed. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State Univ. Press.

Gordon, Jim. 1986. Soul search: Are the lessons for the reader or journalist? News Photographer, March, 19.

_______. 1980. Judgment days for words and pictures. News Photographer, July, 25-29, quoted in H. Eugene Goodwin. 1987. Groping for ethics in journalism. 2d ed. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State Univ. Press, 215.

Gormley, Donald W. 1984. Compassion is a tough word. In Drawing the line, ed. Frank McCulloch, 58-59. Washington, D.C.: American Society of Newspaper Editors Foundation.

Gross, Larry, John Stuart Katz and Jay Ruby, eds.. 1988. Image ethics: The moral rights of subjects in photographs, film, and television. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

Hartley, Craig H. 1983. Ethical newsgathering values of the public and press photographers. Journalism Quarterly 60: 301-4.

Henry, William A., III. 1983. When "News" is almost a crime. Time, 21 March, 84.

Hillsborough crowd pictures justified, says Press Council. 1989. [British] Press Association Newsfile, 30 July.

Hodges, Louis B. 1983. The Alabama TV incident: Reviewing the case to develop principles. In 1983 Journalism Ethics Report, 10. Chicago: Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi.

Hulteng, John L. 1985. The messenger's motives: Ethical problems of the news media. 2d ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Izard, Ralph S. 1984-85. Privacy: Journalists seek balance between news, individuals. In 1984-85 Journalism Ethics Report, 8-11. Chicago: Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi.

Kobre, Kenneth. 1980. Photojournalism: The professionals' approach. Somerville, Mass.: Curtin & London.

_______. 1991. Photojournalism: The professionals' approach. 2d ed. Boston: Focal Press.

Kochersberger, Robert C., Jr. 1988. Survey of suicide photos use by newspapers in three states. Newspaper Research Journal 9 (4): 1-12.

Knightley, Phillip. 1975. The first casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam: The war correspondent as hero, propagandist, and myth maker. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Leekley, Sheryle, and John Leekley.. (1982). Moments: The Pulitzer Prize Photographs (updated edition: 1942-1982). New York: Crown Publishers.

Lester, Paul. 1991. Photojournalism: An ethical approach. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Lewinski, Jorge. 1978. The camera at war: a history of war photography from 1848 to the present day. New York: Simon & Schuster.

MacDougall, Curtis D. 1971. News pictures fit to print ... or are they? Stillwater, Okla.: Journalistic Services.

Matviko, John. 1988. How far do you go and how much do you show: Pittsburgh television news media and the R. Budd Dwyer Suicide. Papers presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Communication Association, Baltimore, Md., 27 April-1 May. ERIC, ED 294 257.

Nakahara, Liz. 1982. Pulitzers: The power and the pressure; winning and coping with photojournalism's most coveted award. Washington Post, 12 September, sec. G (Style), 1.

_______. 1983. In the eye of the storm. Washington Post, 6 November, sec. K (Style), 1.

O'Brien, Sue, Mari Ann Shake and Mark Nolan. 1991. Hard choices: Survey finds editors apply 'breakfast test,' other measuring sticks, in deciding whether to run brutal series which later wins Pulitzer Prize. News Photographer, April, 80-85.

O'Brien, Sue, Mari Ann Shake and Mark Nolan. 1991. A picture of controversy: Pulitzer photos show diverse editorial standards. FineLine, May, 3.

Padgett, George E. 1985-86. Codes should address exploitation of grief by photographers. Journal of Mass Media Ethics 1 (1): 50-56.

_______. 1988. Let grief be a private affair. Quill, February, 13.

Parsons, Patrick R., and William E. Smith. 1988. R. Budd Dwyer: A case study in newsroom decision making. Journal of Mass Media Ethics 3 (1): 84-94.

Patterson, Philip, and Lee Wilkins, eds. 1991. Media ethics: Issues and cases. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown.

Pulitzer flurries. 1978. Columbia Journalism Review, July/August, 16.

Pulitzer prizes. 1978. Facts on File World News Digest, 28 April, 314 C2.

Pulitzer prize-winning stories focus on social ills. 1991. Associated Press, 16 April.

Rivers, William L. and Cleve Mathews. 1988. Ethics for the media. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Rosenberg, Howard 1987. Howard Rosenberg: Shot heard 'round the news rooms. Los Angeles Times, 26 January, Calendar section, part 6, p. 1.

Singletary, Michael W., and Chris Lamb. 1984. News values in award-winning photos. Journalism Quarterly 61: 104-18.

Steele, Bob [Robert M.]. 1989. Pointed question: Publish this photo, or pass? Quill, September, 38-40.

Stein, M.S. 1986. Covering a disaster story. Editor & Publisher, 21 June.

Street, Richard Steven 1986. Graphic excess. Washington Journalism Review, January, 10-11.

Streitfeld, David. 1987. The aftermath of suicides: Attention must be paid, but how much and at what price? Washington Post, 25 May, Style section, C5.

Tsang, Kuo-jen. 1984. News photos in Time and Newsweek. Journalism Quarterly 61: 578.

U.S. photographer reports atrocities. 1977. Facts on File World News Digest, 31 December, 1015 F3.

Wischmann, Lesley. 1987. Dying on the front page: Kent State and the Pulitzer Prize. Journal of Mass Media Ethics 2 (2): 67-74.

THE INFLUENCE OF TEXT AND GRAPHICS IN INCREASING UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTEXT OF FOREIGN NEWS

Jeffrey L. Griffin
Department of Communication
University of Dayton
Dayton, OH 45469-1410
513-229-3532

Robert L. Stevenson
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3365
919-962-4082

Presented to the Newspaper Division,
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication,
Boston, MA, August 1991.

THE INFLUENCE OF TEXT AND GRAPHICS IN INCREASING UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTEXT OF FOREIGN NEWS

INTRODUCTION

The American public, by almost any measure, is less interested in and less knowledgeable about the rest of the world than people in most other countries. U.S. media give less attention to foreign news than media in most other countries. Is there a link between these two melancholy circumstances? And can something be done about it?

The answer to the second question seems to be a tentative "yes." In recent years, newspapers, responding to competition from television, concerned about declining readership, anxious to use new technology, perhaps even worried about their responsibility for public ignorance and apathy, have begun to emphasize background and context in coverage of foreign affairs. Techniques include the traditional method of adding this kind of material to the text of the event-oriented story and a new method, largely borrowed from television, of supplementing the story with a variety of graphic devices, such as maps, graphic summaries of the event and, often, information about the country's history, culture, etc. The assumption is that such information encourages reading, aids comprehension of the event itself and improves understanding of the context in which it occurs.

To test part of this proposition, a simple experiment using a New York Times story about a bloody conflict between Soviet-led forces and Lithuanian nationalists in January 1991 measured the effect of adding background and context information within the story itself and in a separate graphic on reader understanding of the background and context of that dramatic event.

BACKGROUND

The experiment was not developed to test a specific hypothesis derived from previous research on foreign news coverage but rather to answer research questions that emerge from consideration of several aspects of the problem. These include presentations of the news and the American public's ignorance of and lack of interest in world affairs. We will consider each in turn, then move on to the specifics of the experiment.

Media Coverage of International News

Critics charge that media coverage of international news is shallow. Alexandre (1989) suggested a strong correlation between media coverage of international affairs and Americans' knowledge and image of the world, but she offered no scientific evidence to back up that claim. Alexandre branded Americans as globally illiterate and argued that media news values favoring the sensational, the unusual and the superficial have engendered a warped view of the world. As a consequence of such reportage, Alexandre said, citizens cannot make sense of the world.

Alexandre argued that the media fail to present the news comprehensively and understandably. A consequence of the media's limited foreign coverage, she said, is that major sections of the world are ignored or covered only in crisis. She suggested that a geographic imbalance in news coverage is a major determinant in people's geographical knowledge. She focused her criticism on television news: "I would suggest that the impact of this geographic imbalance is sombering. Is it any wonder that Americans are geographic illiterates? Virtually three-quarters of the world is virtually annihilated from their television screens. Could not their mental map be a reflection of the broadcast map on which they travel the globe for 21.5 minutes each night?"

Alexandre's criticisms that media coverage of international affairs is imbalanced and superficial strike a familiar chord.

The MacBride Commission report (1979) on communication problems, a UNESCO document that became a rallying cry for those seeking a New World Information Order, roundly criticized the media for news imbalance and distortion of foreign news. The report depicted an audience-obsessed media guilty of trivializing some international developments, giving superficial or stereotyped character to other news, ignoring context in reporting current events and presenting an "ephemeral" message.

To address such weaknesses of the system, the MacBride Commission recommended that reporters should be trained in the language and be acquainted with the history, institutions, politics, economics and cultural environment of the countries from which they report. The report also called on the media to allot more space and time to reporting foreign events and to providing background about the countries.

Muravachik (1988), who carried out a qualitative analysis of U.S. news coverage of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, suggested that ill-trained and ill-educated journalists were partly to blame for inadequacies in coverage. He found that while television coverage was of insufficient depth, the print media were guilty of misrepresentation. Muravachik argued that journalists misunderstood the goals of the Sandinistas because they were poorly prepared. For one thing, he said, the reporting reflected a lack of familiarity with political theory and history.

Paletz and Entman (1981) studied coverage of the 1978 Zaire rebellion in the Washington Post, San Francisco Chronicle, Newsweek and Time and found that crucial historical background was missing, a balanced geopolitical perspective was glaringly absent, and stereotyped oversimplifications were used in portraying the combatants.

Associated Press correspondent Rosenblum, whose book Coups and Earthquakes (1979) spawned the catchphrase that has come to symbolize the inadequacies of foreign news coverage, blamed the shortcomings on the system:

> Each person involved in presenting foreign news to Americans is part of a process which is riddled with failings, beset by obstacles and tailored largely to wheedle attention from a public assumed to be apathetic and only mildly literate. This system is geared as much to amuse and divert as it is to inform, and it responds inadequately when suddenly called upon to explain something so complex and menacing as a dollar collapse or a war in Asia. Yet it is the American citizen's only alternative to ignorance about the world.

Some scholars contend that the media don't even measure up to that standard. Richstad and Anderson (1981) said Americans' ignorance about the world was partly the fault of the media. "The news media of the United States present a sketchy, distorted, and clouded picture of the world, a simplistic picture, and, perhaps, a very dangerous picture," they wrote.

Common misconceptions among journalists often lead to error-filled stories. In a series of articles that addressed the problem, ASNE bulletin, a trade journal for editors, pointed out a few of these misconceptions that often make their way into print: for example, for Western Hemisphere countries, that Brazilians speak Spanish, that Mexico is in Central America, that Rio de Janeiro is in Argentina or Buenos Aires is in Brazil, and that Caribbean countries are culturally and politically similar.

Hachten (1987) acknowledged the truth of the generalization that most Americans know little of world affairs, but argued that the blame can't be placed solely on the media. Americans have a continental outlook shaped by geographical realities that give rise to a self-centered, isolationist view of the world, Hachten said.

While critics of foreign news coverage continue to trumpet the same theme -- too few stories that too superficially treat too few places -- there are signs of change in the news media. Wire services, whose reportage constitutes the bulk of foreign news found in U.S. newspapers, have reconceptualized their coverage of world affairs. Correspondents increasingly are being asked to provide background, perspective and analysis. An Associated Press official has said that while the news agency will always cover the 'fall of the sparrow,' it has a new mandate to produce additional stories that "give meaning to events."

This philosophical rebirth has given impetus to a more comprehensive approach to foreign coverage by the news services. No longer is coverage piecemeal. Now news services plan coverage so as to provide clients with a total package that often includes background articles, analysis, photographs and graphics in addition to the breaking news story.

Television's ability to report on news events as they unfold made the new mandate imperative. "You have to be able to go past what they can see in the abbreviated accounts they are going to get from radio and television and be able to tell them more," Walter Mears, AP executive editor and vice president, observed in a presstime article.

Another reason news services are providing more complete foreign coverage is readers are demanding it. Interest in foreign news has risen. A 1984 study by the American Society of Newspaper Editors found that readers had become more sophisticated and cosmopolitan and wanted their local newspapers to provide a solid mix of local, national and international news.

But newspapers, as a conduit between the foreign correspondents and the readers, have been slow to catch up. Editors too often harbor a misconception that the public doesn't care about foreign news. A recent study showed that while 41 percent of the public said it was very interested in foreign news, just 5 percent of editors thought their readers were interested in foreign coverage. That serves to illuminate why a 1988 Gannett Media Center survey of the 10 largest U.S. newspapers found that just 2.6 percent of the news space was devoted to foreign affairs. A 1971 study of daily newspapers had found 10.2 percent of the news space devoted to international stories.

Estimates of the amount of foreign news in U.S. (or any other national) media vary dramatically. For example, a 1985 UNESCO study, counting only the main news section, measured 41 percent foreign news in the Washington Post, 39 percent in The New York Times and 30 percent in both the Minneapolis Star and Tribune and Los Angeles Times, but just 19 percent in the New York Daily News. Potter (1987) found that 55 percent of front-page stories in eight prestige U.S. dailies were international in focus.

Gross discrepancies from study to study are a product of several factors. They include decisions on what is foreign news (only stories with foreign datelines or also domestic-datelined stories with some international linkage), which parts of the non-advertising content to include, and selection of the newspapers. Regional U.S. newspapers, which serve all segments of a local audience and define news broadly to include comics and recipes, are often compared with elite national papers in studies that ignore the local and mass-circulation popular press. Even geography can distort comparisons -- by definition a New York story in a Los Angeles newspaper is domestic, but the distance between those two cities is far greater than the distance that separates many countries in Europe.

Graphic Presentations of the News

Whether or not foreign news coverage in newspapers has declined, a striking metamorphosis has taken place in the packaging and presentation of foreign news. Newspapers are increasingly utilizing non-textual ways of presenting information through maps, charts, graphs, illustrations and other graphics. Non-pictorial graphics that present summaries of the day's news or what essentially are headlines are also popular, as are boxes containing background information that provides context for stories. The success of USA Today has rippled through the newspaper industry, imbuing imitators and competitors alike with the notion that newspapers must not merely present the news but also do so in an attractive format. An editor at the San Jose Mercury News, which in 1990 participated in a special project utilizing information graphics, described reader response "to this new weapon in our arsenal" as tremendous. "Busy readers can often get as much as they want out of a story when it's conveyed in a quick, easy-to-read format," Deputy Managing Editor Tom Yarnold said in a Knight-Ridder News article.

Technological advances have facilitated this reconceptualization of what a newspaper looks like. Using a Macintosh desktop computer and illustration software such as MacDraw II, Aldus FreeHand and Adobe Illustrator 88, a graphic artist can create attractive information graphics in a relatively short time. The diffusion of Macintosh desktops at newspapers is a major factor in the explosion in the use of infographics, as they are known in the industry. Another reason is the steady stream of information graphics available through major news services for a subscriber fee. The Associated Press, Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Information Services (KRTN) and The New York Times all produce information graphics and distribute them electronically. Reuters joined the fray last year.

Where once newspapers had to download graphics files using dial-up databases, now many receive the graphics directly on a Macintosh via satellite. This enables them to use the Macintosh to print, revise or store the graphics for future use. Modems make possible the direct transfer of graphics files. Some newspaper graphic artists also find a facsimile machine to be a useful tool that makes it easier for them to communicate visual needs to freelance illustrators.

Information graphics most often take the form of maps, bar charts, tables, line charts, lists, how graphics, pie charts, scatterplots or some combination. Smith and Hajash (1988), who looked at information graphic use in 30 newspapers over seven days, found an average of 4.5 per edition. Most frequently used were maps, which accounted for almost 46 percent of the total. While about half of the maps were weather-related, many were used to show locations discussed in news stories. Nearly three-fourths of the information graphics were used with a story.

The sudden proliferation of information graphics crested during the coverage of the Persian Gulf War. KRTN transmitted about 500 graphics between the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the cease-fire. The Associated Press moved 15-20 new graphics every day, in addition to packages of background graphics. The New York Times News Service also moved computer graphics daily during the conflict.

Newspapers used maps, charts and diagrams to graphically cover the Gulf War in a way that no previous event had ever been covered. Illustrations ranged from simple black-and-white renderings of Scud missiles to four-color depictions of air strikes on Baghdad. Large maps, in particular, were widely utilized -- sometimes even on page 1. "This is a very graphic news event," George Rorick, director of graphics for KRTN, said in a Dayton (Ohio) Daily News story. "It's a very technological war that requires a lot of graphics to explain how things happen."

Information graphics have also become popular abroad as well. Twenty percent of KRTN graphics clients are from outside the United States. Much of the growth in international graphics sales has come in the past year.

Lost in America

The maps, charts, diagrams and other contextual aids also serve as vital markers for media consumers, who by all indications lack the knowledge of world affairs and geography to digest international news stories and understand how international events can affect their lives.

A 1988 Gallup survey on geography found that Americans' knowledge of geography seriously lags behind that of people from other countries. The survey, which asked 10,820 adults in Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States and West Germany to identify 16 places (13 countries, one region and two bodies of water) on a blank world map, found that American adults, with a mean of 8.6 correct responses, ranked sixth among the nine countries. Seventy-five percent of the Americans were unable to locate the Persian Gulf, and 45 percent couldn't find South America. Twenty-five percent couldn't find the Pacific Ocean. In the 18-24 age group, Americans, with a mean of 6.9 correct, were in last place. Fourteen percent couldn't find the United States on a world map. Thirty-two percent could locate Spain -- about half as many as in a 1947 Gallup survey. The results of the survey, which was commissioned by the National Geographic Society, prompted the society's president to comment: "Have you heard of the lost generation? We have found them. They are lost. They haven't the faintest idea where they are."

Other studies corroborate that assessment. A nationwide study of the geography knowledge of more than 3,000 high school seniors (Allen et al., 1990) found that most students did not understand basic concepts of physical and cultural geography and many did not know the location of major countries, cities and landmarks. Even though 83 percent of the students had studied locational information "some" or "alot", only 57 percent responded correctly to locational questions. While 71 percent correctly located Latin

America on a world map, just 37 percent of the 12th graders were able to locate Southeast Asia. While most of the students correctly located major foreign countries such as Canada (87 percent) and the Soviet Union (85 percent), less than half knew the location of Nigeria (42 percent). The study also found that many high school seniors do not understand simple concepts such as longitude and latitude, and even more could not interpret geographic data presented in graphs, charts and maps. Results also indicated that while most students had some knowledge of basic concepts of cultural geography, they lacked any detailed understanding.

University students also fare poorly in surveys of geographical knowledge. In a study of 288 students at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Cross (1987) found that just 36 percent were able to locate at least six of 11 countries on a world map. Eleven percent were unable to locate any of the countries. Cross found that attention to the mass media significantly related to place location knowledge. Newspaper readership showed the strongest positive association with better performance.

In another study of the geographical knowledge of college students, Wood et al. (1988) surveyed 660 freshmen English students at the University of South Dakota and found ignorance of basic geography. The mean percentage of correct responses for questions asking students to identify 10 major bodies of water on a world map was 67, compared to 40 percent correct for 33 countries and 32 percent correct for 33 cities. The authors concluded that such ignorance of basic geography points toward a general indifference about world affairs.

That conclusion is supported by the results of another 1988 Gallup survey. The survey, which asked 1,611 Americans 81 comprehensive questions, found that no more than half could identify the country in which the Sandinistas and the contras were fighting; 52 percent knew that the Soviet Union's war with rebel forces was in Afghanistan; and 55 percent could identify South Africa as the country whose government policy was apartheid. Half were unable to name any of the seven Warsaw Pact countries; in fact, more than 10 percent said the United States was a Warsaw Pact member.

Former Secretary of Education William Bennett said a foundation of geographical knowledge was needed so that people could better understand world events. Testifying before a 1987 Senate subcommittee hearing on geography education and what should be done to improve students' knowledge of the world, Bennett said: "How can students assess the conflict in Afghanistan if they are unaware of its proximity to the Soviet Union? How can they understand our nation's concern over the situation in Central America if they can't locate Nicaragua on a map or identify its neighbors? How can they evaluate debate about the American policy in the Persian Gulf if they don't understand its relation to international shipping and the transportation of oil?"

Neal Lineback, an Appalachian State University geography professor who writes the weekly newspaper column "Geography in the

News," said that a knowledge of geography is essential to understanding the news. "Geography provides a 'window on a changing world,' an interesting and necessary route to viewing and understanding current events," said Lineback. "No news event develops in a vacuum -- interrelationships of human and physical factors play important roles in helping us understand why events happen where they do." When newspaper readers fail to understand the significance of an event in a distant country, Lineback asserted, the reason is often a lack of understanding of geography.

Americans' interest in world geography seems to be increasing. Increased travel abroad by American businessmen and tourists has been a boon to the map-making industry, which has grown by 10-12 percent annually in recent years. The thirst for geographical knowledge has also been whetted by major news events such as the freedom movements in Eastern Europe and, most dramatically, the Persian Gulf War.

This newfound interest doesn't belie the fact that there is a problem. Given this fundamental lack of knowledge about physical and cultural geography, about history and politics, and about the world in general, the media face a special challenge: how to provide a contextual framework that will help the reader understand international stories?

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Providing the essential background information that enables readers to put developments in context is a basic tenet of journalism. Without it, readers are hard-pressed to understand events or grasp their significance or consequences. Indeed, a perusal of basic texts of newswriting underscores that. "Few stories are complete without some background information. Reporters who disregard this advice do so at the peril of inadequately informing their readers and listeners. Events have causes and consequences," Mencher wrote in News Reporting and Writing. Newsom and Wollert, authors of Media Writing, likewise issued a warning about the importance of background: "All beginning newswriters soon learn this cardinal rule of journalism. Never assume anything. And the most important thing not to assume is knowledge on the part of your reader. . .Ask yourself this. What must the readers know to be able to understand the facts you are reporting? You don't need to devote seven paragraphs to a detailed history of the matter. But you must briefly summarize essential background."

Journalists and media critics agree that background and contextual information is vital. They share the perception that knowing this lays a foundation to help the reader understand the news. The research question addressed by this study is whether reader knowledge of background and context can be increased by putting this information in a separate box, as opposed to the traditional method of weaving it into the text. Can contextual aides such as background boxes and maps effectively complement or supplant text in communicating background information to newspaper readers?

METHOD

To test the influence of two different techniques of providing context or background information, a simple 2x2 randomized group, posttest-only experiment was designed. The two factors were "text," with values of present and absent, and "graphic," with the same values. They were crossed to produce four different conditions: text and graphic, text only, graphic only and neither.

The dependent variable was a set of 10 multiple-choice questions about the government, history, people and geography of Lithuania. Examples include: Lithuania's president is (a) Algirdas Saudargas (b) Thelonius Eduardas (c) Sajudis Bilonius (d) Vytautas Landsbergis; Lithuania's population is (a) 3.6 million (b) 5.6 million (c) 7.6 million (d) 9.6 million. Correct answers were summed to produce a single scale with a potential range of 0 to 10. Self-assessments of interest in world affairs, knowledge of world affairs and measures of recent newspaper, network television and newsmagazine use were included for use as covariates. Responses to the first two were: very, fairly, not very and not all interested/informed, number of days in the previous week the subject read a daily paper and watched the evening network news, and number of weeks in the previous four that he or she read a newsmagazine.

The stimulus was a long news story from The New York Times that described in dramatic detail an attack by Soviet armed forces in January 1991, followed by imposition of something close to martial law by an anonymous group of party members. The lead read: "The National Salvation Committee, a faceless group of Communist Party loyalists, imposed a series of repressive measures on Lithuania today after the Soviet Army, with tanks and machine guns, had seized power for the committee overnight."

The story ran about 26" on the front page and on an inside page. Answers to the 10 background/context questions were added to the appropriate versions of the story in separate sentences woven into the body of the story in the "text" version and as a "Lithuania at a Glance" box included on the second page in the "graphic" version. The box, which included a small map, had appeared in The New York Times on an inside page alongside jumps and related stories that were part of the coverage of the event. The headline, byline and photo from the original story were retained so that the stimulus looked very much like a photocopy of a clipping from The New York Times. An example of the stimulus material is provided in an appendix to this paper.

Subjects were undergraduates in communication/journalism classes in three universities in the Midwest and Southeast regions of the United States. In all cases, they were given copies of the stimulus with the quiz sheet sealed and told to read the story, taking as much time as they wanted, then to put the story out of sight before opening the quiz sheet. They were told that the sealed sheet contained questions about the story but nothing beyond that. An informal debriefing indicated that very few -- if any -- of the students guessed the purpose of the experiment and that none of them tried to re-read the story after opening the quiz sheet.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the means of the 0-10 knowledge scale across the entire sample and broken down by experimental condition. It clearly shows the roughly equivalent effect of presenting background or context information either within the story or in a separate graphic. The interior cells show the additive effect of presenting it in both formats. It is notable that knowledge nearly doubled over the control condition when information was presented redundantly both within the story and in an accompanying graphic.

Table 1 about here

To assess the influence of the manipulation on knowledge, data were analyzed with ANOVA, using the self-assessments of knowledge and interest in foreign affairs and the three media-use measures as covariates. Results are shown in Table 2, which is the ANOVA summary table with an overall assessment of the influence of the various components from an MCA (multiple classification analysis) and regression analysis added.

Table 2 about here

Table 2 confirms the strong influence of inclusion of background information in the story and in a separate box independently and the additional effect of repeating the information. Even without the covariates, the model accounts for 32% of the variance in the dependent variable, background knowledge.

The surprising finding is how little the covariate measures of interest in and knowledge of world affairs and particularly "real life" measures of news-media use influenced learning. Of course, at one level, the covariates are independent of the experiment, but one would assume that general orientations toward world affairs and habits of media use would also influence how much subjects learned from the information built into the story or how much knowledge they brought to it. While self-assessments of interest and knowledge were significantly related to knowledge, they contributed relatively little to the variance explained, and the media-use measures were completely unrelated to the dependent variable.

In most studies of media exposure and various cognitive dependent variables, exposure to print media is modestly but positively correlated to knowledge, although typically exposure to television news is not. In this narrowly focused experiment, however, patterns of normal exposure to news media made no contribution to learning from the story.

DISCUSSION

Can newspaper editors increase readers' understanding of complex world events by adding background and context information to the story? To the extent that results of a single experiment can be generalized, the answer is a clear "yes." Is the traditional technique of tucking such information into the body of the story or the modern technique of displaying it in a separate box preferable? Here the answer is that either technique works (with a slight advantage to the traditionalists) but the redundancy of reinforcing one technique with the other is especially effective.

Will readers take the time to read the extra paragraphs or boxes? The answer is less clear, although eye-movement readership studies suggest that most readers do at least scan most of the elements of a page layout. The effect of a single story may be minimal, but the cumulative effect of repeated background information on a long-running story may be significant.

An informal survey of current newspapers and newsmagazines suggests that more and more of them are using the graphics and other types of displays that are available from syndicates or produced in their own art departments. Television, too, has reinforced the dramatic power of its live coverage with effective use of graphics to summarize, reinforce and underscore the pictures. The Persian Gulf war brought the use of graphics and allied display techniques to a new level of sophistication: full pages of maps, graphic summaries of tactical movements, complex charts of history and capabilities. Television and newspapers seemed to compete with each other to develop innovative ways of packaging information. To what effect? That is the important question, of course, whether the traditional appalling public ignorance of and indifference to the rest of the world can be mitigated by the innovative use of new and old methods of presenting the day's events within a context that makes them intelligible. This one experiment suggests that either addition of background to the text of a story or use of a separate graphic accompanying the text -- or better, using both -- significantly increases knowledge of the history, background and context of a dramatic event. But more can be done.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Results of specific experiments become generalizable through replication, of course, but also through expansion of the domain of the research. In this case, studies of ways of increasing public understanding of news could usefully include maps to expand knowledge of geography, grouping of related stories and linking them to a single graphic, and use of boxed highlights to reinforce the main points of the story. Comparable experiments of television presentation techniques could also be devised.

The goal of such research is twofold. On one hand, it might help both newspapers and TV maintain (or win back) their declining audiences. This is not a trivial consideration when most newspapers are reducing their foreign coverage and the future of network television news seems to be in question. On the other hand, further research could also help journalists with their larger social obligation to inform a public that is both increasingly indifferent to civic responsibility and unprepared to fulfill it.

Table 1. Mean Knowledge Scores by Experimental Conditions.

		Graphic		
		No	Yes	Total
Text				
	No	4.00 n=72	6.37 n=70	5.17 n=142
	Yes	6.90 n=69	7.88 n=72	7.40 n=141
Total		5.42 n=141	7.13 n=142	6.28 n=283

Table 2. Influence of Text and Graphic, Self-Assessed Knowledge and Interest and Media Exposure on Knowledge.

Source of variation	SS	DF	MS	F	P	Corr*
Covariates						
Interest	57.34	1	57.34	15.55	.00	r= .19
Knowledge	35.70	1	135.70	9.68	.00	r= .15
TV news	.29	1	.29	.08	.78	r= -.01
Newspaper	6.35	1	6.35	1.72	.19	r= .07
News magazine	.77	1	.77	.21	.65	r= .02
Main effects						
Text	296.78	1	296.78	80.48	.00	β= .43
Box	162.07	1	162.07	43.95	.00	β= .31
Interaction						
Text x Box	27.94	1	27.94	7.58	.01	
Explained	686.33	8	85.79	23.26	.00	
Residual	1003.12	272	3.59			
Total	1689.45	280	6.03			R = .62 R^2= .39

*Covariate correlations are partial correlations, controlling for all other covariates; main effects betas are standardized regression coefficients, controlling for the other independent variable and covariates. The multiple correlation coefficient assesses the full model.

APPENDIX

One of the four versions of the experiment stimulus is printed on the next two pages (at 75% of original size) to provide an indication of the form that the stimulus took. The version presented, the redundant condition, contains background information in both the text and in the accompanying box. The other conditions were: to have the background information in the text, but provide no box; to have the background information in a box only, but not in the text; and to have the background information in neither the text nor in an accompanying box. The stimulus versions are manipulations of the lead story of The New York Times on Jan. 14, 1991, and a background box that accompanied that and related stories on an inside page.

SOVIET LOYALISTS IN CHARGE AFTER ATTACK IN LITHUANIA; 13 KILLED; CROWDS DEFIANT

Associated Press

Lithuanians trying to pull a man away from a Soviet tank yesterday.

100 ARE WOUNDED

General Is Commandant, a Communist Group Declares on Radio

By BILL KELLER

Special to The New York Times

VILNIUS, Lithuania, Jan. 13 -- The National Salvation Committee, a faceless group of Communist Party loyalists, imposed a series of repressive measures on Lithuania today after the Soviet Army, with tanks and machine guns, had seized power for the committee overnight.

The committee ruled today in force but not in spirit, after a night of violence that left 13 people dead and more than 100 wounded by bullets or tank treads, according to official reports.

Lithuania, a republic about the size of West Virginia, is bounded by the Baltic Sea and Poland to the west, Latvia to the north and Byelorussia to the east and south.

Ethnic Lithuanians account for about 80 percent of the republic's 3.6 million population, which also includes Russians, Poles, Jews, Byelorussians and Letts.

The Salvation Committee announced on the radio at 8 A.M. that a major general of the Soviet Army had been named commandant of Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital.

Using the Lithuanian state broadcast studios and transmitter captured early this morning, the committee installed by Moscow declared a curfew, banned public gatherings, outlawed the possession of television cameras or tape recorders and imposed a "social regime" of personal searches and random document checks.

The events here, in addition to repressing the nationalist movement that intensified when Lithuania declared its independence in March, also menace the many other Soviet republics -- including the largest, Russia -- that have, to one degree or another, flouted the authority of President Mikhail S. Gorbachev. The grim attack left in tatters his international prestige as the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

The Kremlin was a study in silence today as thousands of protest marchers braved the new mood of authoritarian crackdown and angrily denounced Mr. Gorbachev as a fascist for the use of deadly military force in Lithuania against unarmed civilians.

President Gorbachev's Interior Minister, Boris K. Pugo,tonight defended the military's behavior, saying in a national television interview that the violence was started by the Lithuanians.

Mr. Pugo asserted that the National Salvation Committee, by all indications a front for the Communist Party, had appealed to the military to intervene after the elected Lithuanian Parliament "lost control" of the situation in the republic. His statement eerily echoed the Soviet pretext for suppressing democratic movements in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Continued on Page A6, Column 1

Loyalist Takeover Leaves 13 Dead in Lithuania

Continued from Page A1

"The step taken was not the best step, but that's the way it is," Mr. Pugo said. "The situation is controllable."

The violent action and the ensuing takeover appeared to have the full support of President Gorbachev, who had warned of reprisals if Lithuania failed to back down from its independence claims and who has not commented publicly on the army's attack.

Lithuanian voters had rejected the Communist Party in democratic voting for the Parliament in February 1990. Parliament members then chose a non-Communist Premier and dared Moscow's wrath by declaring independence from the Soviet Union, which had incorporated Lithuania in 1940. Lithuania was occupied by Germany during World War II, but the Soviet Union regained control in 1945.

Despite the military crackdown, the Parliament has refused to surrender, working in its barricaded building in constant expectation that its members would be the next and final target.

As the Parliament worked, ambulances filled with the dead and wounded raced across the city.

At Hospital No. 1 in the city center, two bodies lay contorted on a floor in a spreading puddle of blood, one of them a boy who appeared to be about 10 years old. An ambulance pulled up with three more corpses, including a woman and an elderly man with a bullet hole above his right eye.

Doctors said that most of the casualties came from bullet wounds, although there were also numerous mangled limbs run over by armored vehicles.

Based on a survey of Vilnius hospitals, the Parliament information office today reported 13 people known dead, including one soldier shot in the head, and 164 injured.

The besieged government led by President Vytautas Landsbergis drew moral support from a crowd outside the legislature that swelled this morning to more than 20,000 people, in defiance of the new commandant's ban and despite appeals from their leaders to go home to safety.

Throughout the day they burst into musical chants of "Lithuania," "Shame" and especially "Freedom," as thunderous as the tank cannon that had rocked the city during the night.

Many of them professed their willingness to die in the square to prove their devotion to independence.

The Parliament was fortified by a cordon of buses and trucks and barriers of iron grillwork. Several hundred pro-independence militia inside prepared to resist and attack with about 100 hunting rifles, firebombs, sticks and fire hoses.

The Sajudis independence movement, where most of those in the Lithuanian government began their political lives, called a general strike to begin on Monday.

The violence inflicted on crowds during the night seemed almost certain to mark the end of President Gorbachev as the hero of Soviet reform. The Soviet leader had publicly acquiesced in the demands of the hardliners for a restoration of discipline in the country. Even if it should emerge that the military exceeded whatever license Mr. Gorbachev gave them, he made no apparent move to stop the bloodshed and has said nothing so far in criticism of his troops.

The new commandant of Vilnius, Maj. Gen. Vladimir N. Uskhochnik, had told reporters at a press conference hours before this morning's violence that he derived his authority from Mr. Gorbachev and served only the President. Military officials have refused to say how many troops were involved in the operation.

A Kremlin delegation including the presidents of Armenia and Byelorussia shuttled between the Parliament and the National Salvation Committee today without disclosing any resolution to the crisis.

The Soviet Defense Ministry announced last week that it was sending special paratroop units to the Baltics and four other republics to force compliance with the military draft in areas of dramatically low registration. Dozens of young men who had evaded military service were reported to have been rounded up in Lithuania, but defiance of the draft seemed to be forgotten in the stunning weekend violence.

At 1:35 this morning, the first percussion of tank artillery crashed through the city. A convoy of T-72 combat tanks and armored personnel carriers roared up a hillside to take over the republic's television and radio transmitter.

The tanks hesitated briefly at a barricade of parked trucks and cars, then growled ahead over the barrier and through a pack of young men who stood in the way.

The 1,100-foot tower was surrounded by hundreds of men, women and teenagers summoned by the Landsbergis government to defend the facility with their presence. Ninety minutes earlier, the place had been a festival of folk dancing and disco music, but it soon turned into a scene of panic and astonished rage as the army rumbled through, training floodlights on the crowd and firing with machine guns. Much of the gunfire was into the air, but soldiers perched atop their vehicles sometimes fired into the confused crowd.

Many Lithuanians refused to retreat under the attacks. At the television tower, sporadic gunfire was heard for at least 90 minutes. Groups of women surrounded armored vehicles yelling epithets at the troops.

"When the women called them fascists, the soldiers beat them with the butts of their automatic rifles," said Eduardas Potasinkskas, a radio engineer present during the siege of the broadcast studios.

Throughout the night Parliament met to demonstrate its legitimate claim to power and to lay the groundwork for what comes next.

The Lithuanian Foreign Minister, Algirdas Saudargas, who was in Warsaw, was authorized to form a government in exile if the Parliament was taken.

Lithuania AT A GLANCE

The Government

The Soviet Union declared Lithuania a constituent republic on Aug. 3, 1940. After the defeat of Germany, which occupied Lithuania in World War II, the Soviet Union re-established its control in the following decades with a popular independence movement called Sajudis. Voters rejected the Communist Party when they elected a Parliament in February 1990; the legislators then chose a non-Communist Premier and voted to have Lithuania secede from the Soviet Union. The President of Lithuania is Vytautas Landsbergis.

FINLAND
Leningrad
Tallinn
ESTONIA
RUSSIA
Riga
LATVIA
Moscow
LITHUANIA
Vilnius
SOVIET UNION
BYELORUSSIA
Miles
0
200
UKRAINE

The New York Times

History

There are accounts of Lithuanian tribes going back to the first century A.D. Under pressure from neighboring Germans, Lithuanian tribes united in the 13th century to form a powerful medieval state; a Polish-Lithuanian union established in the 14th century lasted 400 years. That period was followed by increasing Polish domination, which ended with the partition of Poland in 1795, when Lithuania was divided between Russian and Prussian control. A cultural renaissance and growing demands for Lithuanian autonomy followed the political upheaval that broke out in Russia in 1905; after a period of German occupation in World War I, the country became independent. In 1939, a mutual assistance treaty was signed in Moscow in which Lithuania was compelled to admit Soviet garrisons and grant air bases. On June 15, 1940, Moscow issued an ultimatum demanding creation of a "friendly" Lithuanian Government, followed the same day by occupation by the Red Army and incorporation into the Soviet Union within two months. Mass deportations of the intelligentsia, civil servants and others to Siberia followed. Lithuania was overrun by Germany during its attack on the Soviet Union, and remained occupied until the Soviet Union re-established its control as World War II drew to a close.

The People

Ethnic Lithuanians make up about 80 percent of the republic's population of 3.6 million. There are also Russians, Poles, Jews, Byelorussians and Letts. The retention of the Lithuanian language, which belongs to the Baltic branch of the Indo-European family, has been a prime goal of the independence movement.

Geography

Lithuania is bounded on the west by the Baltic Sea and Poland, to the north by Latvia, and to the east and south by Byelorussia. The country covers 25,170 square miles, about the size of West Virginia.

The Economy

Before World War II, Lithuania's economy was mostly agricultural, but under Soviet control, industrial development was stressed. Production of machine tools, household appliances, radio, television and tape-recording equipment, much of it destined for the Soviet market, has been emphasized. The country is dependent on other Soviet republics for gas and oil supplies, and this has given Moscow a strong measure of control over Lithuania.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

REFERENCES

Adams, William C. [ed.]. 1982. Television Coverage of International Affairs. (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex).

Alexandre, Laurien. 1989. International Issues, Media Coverage and Public Ignorance: Or, So, Where Is Africa, Anyway? unpublished paper presented at International Conference on Constitutional Government and the Development of an Enlightened Citizenry in Los Angeles in September 1989. ERIC document no. ED314303.

Allen, Russell, et al. 1990. The Geography Learning of High School Seniors (Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service). ERIC document no. ED313317.

Americans Falter on Geography Test. 1988. The New York Times (July 28), p. A16.

Astor, David. 1991. Sales Are Booming in Overseas Markets. Editor & Publisher (Jan. 26), pp. 38-42.

Ayers, H. Brandt. 1990. Small Town, U.S.A., Is Going Global. The New York Times (Jan. 20), p. A19.

Cooper, Kenneth J. 1989. Americans, Soviets Share Symptoms of a Map Gap; Geographic Test Finds 'Astonishing Ignorance'. The Washington Post (Nov. 9), p. A3.

Cross, John A. 1987. Factors Associated With Students' Place Location Knowledge. Journal of Geography (March/April), pp. 59-63.

Dillon, Jim. 1991. Newspapers' Depiction of Gulf War Has Been Quite Graphic. Dayton Daily News (Feb. 17), pp. E1-2.

Fitzgerald, Mark. 1991. Graphics on the Gulf. Editor & Publisher (March 9), p. 12.

Geography Education: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Education, Arts and Humanities of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, United States Senate. 1987. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office

Geography Package Offered to Newspapers. 1990. Editor & Publisher (Nov. 10), p. 48.

Goodman, Walter. 1991. With News Lacking, the Maps Shine. The New York Times (Feb. 25), p. A17.

Hachten, William A. 1987. The World News Prism. (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press).

Helliwell, John. 1987. Knight-Ridder Profits From PC-based News Graphics Service. PC Week (May 12), p. C11.

Here Be Foreigners. 1988. The Economist (July 30), p. 26.

Larson, James and Andy Hardy. 1977. International Affairs Coverage on Network Television News: A Study of News Flow. Gazette (Vol. 23, No. 4).

Leslie, Connie. 1988. Lost on the Planet Earth. Newsweek (Aug. 8), p. 31.

Lineback, Neal. 1990. Geography in the News. Geography Education Update (Fall), p. 3.

Meisler, Stanley. 1989. Where in World Are We? Some U.S., Soviet Citizens Not Sure. Los Angeles Times (Nov. 9), p. A18.

Mencher, Melvin. 1991. News Reporting and Writing. (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown).

Muravachik, Joshua. 1988. News Coverage of the Sandinista Revolution. (Washington, D.C.: American Institute for Public Policy Research).

Nation's High School Students Make Low Scores in Geography. 1990. Durham (N.C.) Morning Herald (Feb. 8), p. 10A.

Newsom, Doug and James A. Wollert. 1988. Media Writing. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth).

NYTS/NYTNS Has Trainor Pieces and More on Gulf. 1991. Editor & Publisher (Feb. 9), pp. 40-41.

Paletz, David L. and Robert M. Entman. 1981. Media·Power·Politics (New York: The Free Press).

Persian Gulf Graphics From KRTN. 1991. Editor & Publisher (Jan. 19), p. 43.

Potter, W. James. 1987. News From Three Worlds in Prestige U.S. Newspapers. Journalism Quarterly (Spring), pp. 73-79.

Rather Criticizes Decline in International Reporting. 1991. Broadcasting (Feb. 4), p. 39.

Reuters Starts Graphics Service. 1990. presstime (June), p. 70.

Richstad, Jim and Michael H. Anderson [eds.]. 1981. Crisis in International News: Policies and Prospects. (New York: Columbia University Press).

Rosenblum, Mort. 1979. Coups and Earthquakes. (New York: Harper & Row Publishers).

Ruth, Marcia. 1986. Covering Foreign News. presstime (April), pp. 28-35.

Shaw, David. 1986. More Color, Graphics; Newspapers Going for a New Look. Los Angeles Times (March 13), p. A1.

Silverstone, Stuart. 1990. Infographics: A Historical Perspective. Aldus Magazine (Jan./Feb.), pp. 26-29.

Silverstone, Stuart. 1987. Newsroom Graphics. Macworld (February), pp. 131-135.

Smith, Edward J. and Donna J. Hajash. 1988. Informational Graphics in 30 Daily Newspapers. Journalism Quarterly (Fall), pp. 714-718.

Smith, Teresa. 1990. First Edge Projects Get off the Ground. Knight-Ridder News (Summer), pp. 6-7.

Steinhauer, Jennifer. 1990. With Computers, Mapmakers Are Redrawing the World. The New York Times (Dec. 12), p. F5.

Tankard, James W. 1987. Quantitative Graphics in Newspapers. Journalism Quarterly (Summer/Autumn), pp. 406-415.

Weinstein, Lawrence and Anton de Man. 1987. U.S. Students Do Not Know as Much as Foreign Students About the World. Bulletin of the Psychonomic Society (May), pp. 202-203.

What Does All This Foreign News Really Mean. 1990. ASNE Bulletin (March), pp. 4-18.

Which Way Is the Pacific Ocean? 1988. U.S. News & World Report (Aug. 8), p. 11.

Wood, Robert W. et al. 1988. Geographical Knowledge of University Students. ERIC document no. ED296944.

ENDURING IMAGE OF WAR:
ANALYSIS OF A NEWSWEEK COVER

Jack Lule
Department of Journalism
Lehigh University
Bethlehem, PA 18015
(215)758-4177

ENDURING IMAGE OF WAR: ANALYSIS OF A NEWSWEEK COVER

The image is compelling. Beneath the bright red and white banner that proclaims Newsweek, beneath a yellow diagonal corner strip that advertises, "INSIDE Pullout Map of The War Zone," a man's round, heavy face fills two thirds of the magazine cover. His brown hair is cut short and is half hidden by the Newsweek banner. The forehead is peppered with cuts. Above the left eye a large red gash extends into shadows. Both eyes are bruised, almost blackened. The lips are puffy and bloodied. Beneath a slight double chin, the thick neck is cut and scratched above a dark green collar.

A strange texture distorts the surface of the photo. The cover is a photograph of a television screen and the image of the face has been so magnified that the thousands of tiny, phosphorous dots that make up the television picture are plainly visible. The washed out, blue-green tint of the screen palls the picture. Filling the remaining third of the cover, headlines are stacked to the left of the face below the banner. "HARD DAYS AHEAD" says the primary headline. Three subheads are arranged below this: "A Brutal War on the Ground?; The POWs: Torture and Torment; Saddam's Environmental Terror."

The cover appeared on the Feb. 4, 1991 issue of Newsweek, about two weeks after the start of the Persian Gulf War. Its caption was found on page 9: "Cover: Photo of Lt. Jeffrey Zaun in captivity, from Iraqi TV, by Andy Hernandez for Newsweek." Zaun was one of the first American prisoners of war taken by the Iraqis. He and other Allied prisoners had been thrust into the news that week when they were shown on Iraqi television soon after their capture. They had read apparently scripted statements apologizing for their role in hostilities against Iraq. They were cut and bruised but it was impossible to tell whether they had been injured in combat or by their captors.[1] Their appearance on Iraqi television caused worldwide protest. The Bush administration charged the Iraqis with war crimes. U.S. television networks, after some initial hesitation, showed the footage, again to protest.[2]

The Newsweek cover ignited another firestorm of criticism. Three weeks after its appearance, the magazine ran a number of letters blasting the Zaun cover. In its "Mail Call" box, the magazine stated that "hundreds of readers complained about the grim cover photo."[3] Said one letter: "Your decision to publish a photo of POW Navy Lt. Jeffrey Zaun's bruised face on Newsweek's Feb. 4 cover angered and offended me. You have helped the Iraqi government exploit Lieutenant Zaun and further stripped a soldier of his dignity."[4]

The purpose of this essay is to analyze and interpret the Newsweek cover of Feb. 4, 1991. Motivation for study of the cover runs deeper than a desire to explore the criticism surrounding the controversial image. Long after Zaun's name is forgotten, his battered face -- frozen from the television screen -- may become one of the lasting images of the short-lived Persian Gulf conflict.[5] The Zaun cover may endure, this essay will argue, because it captures in a succinct and encompassing image several themes that dominated the Gulf War and its coverage, themes that include: the human wages of war; the ascendancy of broadcast news coverage and the changing role of the print press, and, more critically, the ideological role of the media in a nation at war. Study of the Newsweek image can offer insights into the complex and contradictory contexts in which coverage of the Gulf conflict was embedded.[6]

Although an analysis devoted to the meanings of a single news photograph is unusual, it is not rare as the review of literature will show. It allows for the "thick description" affirmed by Geertz whose aim is "to draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts; to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them exactly with complex specifics."[7] Indeed, classic analyses of news photographs stand out in qualitative, interpretive studies whose detail and depth offer the opportunity to explore subtle shadings and multiple meanings that reside in the photographic image.

Subtleties and multiplicities can be overlooked in these times of 24-hour, live-feed reporting. The essay is motivated finally by a desire to slow the flow of coverage that poured and still pours from the Gulf, to pause and consider the implications and dimensions of a single dram from that flow, and to affirm the value of interpretation and thick description in the satellite-fed face of real-time. The Newsweek cover itself seems to invite such contemplation, freezing for a moment just one of the illimitable images of the television screen.

Past Study of the News Photo

Numerous studies have analyzed news photos.[8] Of special interest to this essay were studies of wartime photography and the relationship between such images and social and political life. Sherer studied news photos of the Vietnam War and found that as public opinion gradually shifted against the war, photographs of the war shifted from non-combat to combat images.[9] Thompson and Clarke looked at psychological consequences from the viewing of Vietnam war photos.[10] Patterson studied the portrayal of the Vietnam war in newsmagazines and found that the photographs produced "a series of dramatic, striking and memorable impressions." But, he noted, "these images were not the stuff from which regular media coverage of Vietnam was made."[11]

Of particular relevance to this essay were classic studies in interpretive research that have taken up the theory and practice of analyzing the news photograph. In numerous essays, Roland Barthes provided essential insights into the levels of meanings produced by the news photo. He built a method for exploring the mythic structure in the "rhetoric of the image."[12]

Barthes' methodological essay, "The Photographic Message," offered a detailed approach to analyzing news photographs. He broke down his analysis into three parts. Textual analysis traces the relationship between image and accompanying captions. Denotation describes literal readings of the image. Connotation explores mythic and ideological readings.[13] Barthes insisted upon the multiple meanings of the press photograph and the ability of analysis to isolate and organize such meanings. "The photograph is not simply a product or a channel but also an object endowed with a structural autonomy," he wrote. The method of study thus "can only be the immanent analysis of the unique structure that a photograph constitutes."[14] Barthes' well-known example of mythic dimensions found in a French magazine's cover photograph of a black soldier's salute was of great value to this research.[15] Closely related essays included his analyses of a Panzani food advertisement as well as still photos from Eisenstein films.[16]

Using Barthes' insights, Stuart Hall also has explored what he calls the "determination of news photographs." He cites with approval Barthes' observation that photographs "are more imperative than writing, they impose meaning at one stroke, without analysing or diluting it."[17] Like Barthes, Hall believes that news photographs are composed of codes of denotation, which are "precise, literal, unambiguous," as well as codes of connotation, which are cultural accomplishments. News photos, Hall says, take from and add to "the social stock of knowledge at hand in any culture."[18]

For Hall, the signification of the news photo proceeds on two levels. The first is interpretation of the literal news value. Akin to Barthes' notions of linguistic and denoted messages, the news value is "the common-sense understandings as to what constitutes the news" in the photo. The second level engages ideological messages, the connoted themes that belong to "the realm of moral-political discourse in the society."[19] Through study of both levels, Hall states, analysis finds the relationship between news images and social life.

Method

The method of study is an interpretive analysis that borrows primarily from structural principles outlined by Barthes and Hall. The analysis worked first to establish linguistic messages, in this case the accompanying headline text. "Anchorage" is the most frequent function of the linguistic message, Barthes and Hall state.[20] The written word attempts to anchor, explain and fix the meaning of the photographic image. In Hall's words, the captions "tell us, in words, exactly how the subject's expression ought to be read."[21] Or, as Barthes stated, the text "helps me to choose the correct level of perception, permits me to focus not simply my gaze but also my understanding." The text "loads the image, burdening it with a culture, a moral, an imagination."[22]

The linguistic message of the *Newsweek* cover certainly proved worthy of study. As will be seen, "HARD DAYS AHEAD," embellished by subordinate headlines, did attempt to "load the image" and focus the understanding of readers. Combined with denotative and connotative elements of the image, the linguistic message supported a number of important interpretations.[23]

The second step was analysis of *denoted images*, the literal meanings of the photograph. As Barthes noted, literal and symbolic messages are difficult to separate completely. However, he affirmed the necessity of simply describing what is recorded in the photograph at "the level of the identification of the scene represented."[24] In Hall's terms, denotation organizes the photo's "news value."[25]

This relatively straightforward, descriptive step was complicated by a key characteristic of the *Newsweek* cover: The image is a photograph of a televised image. Analysis of the cover's denotation had to take into account that it was not only a photo of a POW but a photo of a televised picture of a POW. Part of the represented scene and its news value were the origins and implications of the televised portrayal of the Allied captives. This aspect of the cover had great significance for interpretation.

Lastly, the analysis considered *connoted images*, in Hall's terms, "the configurations of meaning which permit a sign to signify, in addition to its denotative reference, *other, additional implied meanings*."[26] In this step, Hall says, "the photo, which already meets and has been exposed within the formal criteria of news, is linked with an interpretation which exploits its connotative value."[27] For Barthes and Hall, connotation brings the analysis of news photographs to ideological messages that are hidden by the "naturalness of the sign" and the *having-been-there* quality of the photographic image.[28] Analysis confronts the "depoliticized speech" of myth, Barthes affirms, and attempts to "unveil" the ideological message behind the image.[29]

This level of analysis proved particularly fruitful for the *Newsweek* image. Ideological messages recovered from the cover were tied in important ways to social and political contexts surrounding the Gulf conflict. And by explicitly invoking and reworking the disputed television image, the Newsweek cover offered interpretations not only on the war but, more broadly, on the shifting responsibilities and limitations of the media in wartime.

With this approach, the Newsweek cover was studied as one of the important, perhaps enduring images of the Gulf War. The essay will argue that the importance of the image derives from its links to the charged social and political context surrounding the war and its coverage. As discussed below, three dominant motifs were identified within the image: the human wages of war; the changing roles of broadcast and print media, and the ideological role of the media in wartime.

The Human Wages of War

The first reading of the Newsweek image was guided by consideration of the linguistic message. "HARD DAYS AHEAD" can be understood as referring both to the image it abuts and to the deck of headlines beneath it. The words imply that difficult times await Navy Lt. Jeffrey Zaun and other prisoners of war. They face captivity, possible torture. Zaun's battered face offers graphic support.

Through the deck of subheads, the cover supplies broader referents of "HARD DAYS AHEAD." Directly below the main head, in smaller type of upper and lower case, the subheads can be seen almost as an outline of hard days. "A Brutal War on the Ground" refers to the seemingly inevitable land war that would follow weeks of bombings. "The POWs: Torture and Torment" suggests the painful future faced by captives. "Saddam's Environmental Terror" refers to Allied charges that Iraqi forces purposely discharged a huge oil spill into the Persian Gulf. Through these subheads, the magazine provides its own interpretations of hard days ahead.

Less directly, the linguistic messages might be confronting another important theme from the early days of the war. The dominance of Allied air power, combined with Iraq's decision to hide its jets or "save them" in Iran, resulted in an air war with few Allied casualities (although untold numbers of Iraqis were killed). Military technology had so developed, it seemed, that a kind of antiseptic warfare could proceed with little risk to combatants. Bloodied and bruised prisoners of war appearing on television and in the press helped to end that delusion. The price of war, as always, would include the blood of soldiers. "HARD DAYS AHEAD" can be understood as giving voice to that realization. Indeed, in its defense of the cover three weeks later, Newsweek cited this interpretation:

> Throughout the opening days of the war, there was an inclination among military briefers, the press and much of the American public to view the war as a remote and somehow antiseptic conflict. Newsweek genuinely believes it was the images of the anguished and battered faces of the captured pilots that brought the war home to many Americans.[30]

The Changing Roles of Media

Folowing Barthes and Hall, a second level of analysis took up denotation, the literal meanings of the image, "the common-sense understandings as to what constitutes the news" in the photo.[31] The level was complicated and enriched with recognition that the Newsweek cover has two literal dimensions. It is an image of an American POW. But it is also, clearly and self-consciously, an image of a television screen. With its magnified phosphorous dots and tinted tone, the image insists on its broadcast origins. The combination of the two dimensions produced a number of readings.

A primary, literal referent of the image is the original context of the television picture: The controversy that week surrounding the decision, attributed to Hussein himself, to put Allied prisoners of war on Iraqi television in an apparent propaganda ploy to bolster the morale of Iraqis and to break or bend the war spirit of Americans.[32] The cover can be understood as the isolation of one image from a cruel, propaganda campaign, "ghoulish" and "ham-handed."[33] It can be understood as an image of duplicity, of moral violation by the Iraqi leader already vilified and demonized in the American press.[34] This reading is supported by the literal representation of Zaun as well as the emphatic television origins of the image.

In its defense of the cover, Newsweek reaffirmed this reading. "Newsweek agrees the photo is disturbing. Far from any attempt to sensationalize the plight of Lieutenant Zaun, our cover decision was based on our judgment of what the brutal treatment of POWs revealed about the nature of Saddam Hussein . . . . The POW pictures revealed the Iraqi dictator's complete misreading of how those images would affect international opinion."[35]

Another reading of the image may also evoke the controversy stirred by U.S. networks' re-broadcast of the Iraqi television footage as well as questions concerning television's overall war coverage.[36] Although the caption on page nine states that the cover photograph was taken from Iraqi television, the cover itself makes no such claim. It is a television image. Newsweek editors have chosen an image that caused a great outcry against U.S. networks and have kept alive questions about television's war coverage.

Context supplements this interpretation. Television coverage of the war and public attitudes toward that coverage were an important subtopic in discourse on the war.[37] At first, television seemed a marvel. People stayed home to watch a real-time war during prime time. Networks suspended regular broadcasting. CNN attracted huge audiences. But after the first weeks, after interest waned and hard news was harder to come by, after reporters were placed in opposition to emerging military heroes, questions were raised about television's role.[38] The questions had roots at least as deep as the Vietnam War. Does television coverage of war turn people against war? Does news use and abuse victims of war in its quest for sensational and dramatic content? The Newsweek image revived such critical questions. By emphasizing the broadcast origins of the POW's image, the cover evoked questions that accompanied broadcast coverage of the war.

A related reading of the cover takes up another important theme of the Gulf conflict: the tension between the military and the news media. Newsweek's use of the controversial photograph of a prisoner of war indirectly raised the issue of military restrictions on press content. Even before the war started, the Department of Defense had shown sensitivity to reports on captives. "Operation Desert Shield Ground Rules" forbade "specific identifying information on missing or downed aircraft or ships while search and rescue operations are planned or underway."[39] The accompanying "Guidelines for News Media" offer lengthy appeals for sensitivity, especially by visual media:

> There have been instances in which the next of kin have first learned of the death or wounding of a loved one through the news media. The problem is particularly difficult for visual media. . . . The anguish that sudden recognition at home can cause far outweighs the news value of the photograph, film or videotape.[40]

The broadcast and print reports by U.S. media of Allied captives such as Zaun violated neither Desert Shield ground rules nor the media guidelines. Still, the publication and broadcast of the captives resulted in heated criticism by U.S. military officials.[41] Newsweek's cover -- a photograph of one of the offending images -- called forth the controversy, evoking the dispute between military and media. Again, context augments this reading. Throughout the war, the military effectively limited newsgathering activities of journalists. Polls showed the public supported such restrictions.[42] Journalists found themselves fighting to provide more coverage while defending themselves against those who complained of too much coverage.[43]

Intriguingly, a final denoted reading of the Newsweek cover can be seen as a paean to television coverage of the war and an acknowledgement of the shifting role of the print media in a time of real-time reporting. The magazine employed as a cover a photograph taken from television. The emphatic broadcast origins of the image can be seen as admitting to the dominating presence of television throughout the Gulf conflict. The image acknowledges the changing -- some might say diminished -- role of the print press in a time of televised war. Print journalists, prevented from being on location, must resort to taking information and even pictures from their television sets.

The cover is about suffering but it is also about media. This dimension of the Newsweek cover is linked to the peculiar origins of the photo. Unlike a traditional photograph that provides, as Barthes said, the sense of "having-been-there," the Newsweek cover attests to not having-been-there.[44] Having-been-there, for this photograph, is only having been in front of the ubiquitous television screen -- like everyone else. The cover photograph of the television screen demands distance, destroys immediacy, fractures intimacy. Removed, the press, like us, watch powerless from afar.

Newsweek editors could have retouched the photograph to deemphasize or remove the traces of the television image; they could have chosen another photograph, another subject. By using and making obvious the broadcast origins of the image, Newsweek editors submitted to the primacy of broadcast in Gulf war coverage. Again, context supports this reading. Broadcast reporting of the war -- "the CNN War" was a temporary title -- had become an important way of talking about and thinking about the war. In numerous articles, the print press acknowledged the ascendancy of television's immediacy and impact and searched for its own role and renewal.[45]

Ideology and the Preparation for War

As Barthes and Hall have noted, the importance of the news photograph lies not only in its linguistic and denoted messages but also in deeper, ideological themes captured in the final analytical step: connotation of the image. In Hall's terms, these ideological themes "are forms of social knowledge, derived from the social practices, the knowledge of institutions, the beliefs and the legitimations which exist in a diffused form within a society, and which order that society's apprehension of the world in terms of dominant meaning-patterns."[46]

Paradoxically, for both Barthes and Hall, ideological themes in news photos offer no new perspectives but confirm the shape and structure of the established order. Again citing Barthes, Hall writes, "The ideological concepts embodied in photos and texts in a newspaper, then, do not produce new knowledge about the world. They produce recognition of the world, as we have already learned to appropriate it: 'dreary trivialities' or a ritual, a functionless creed.'"[47]

Found behind or within the "concrete particularity" of the image, these ideological concepts are "the fleeting forms of a more archetypal" knowledge.[48] Barthes called such forms myths and found in them the essence of ideology. For Barthes, the news photo of the black soldier's salute is the image of successful imperialism; for Hall, the photo of police battling demonstrators signifies the glory of the British police and the rule of law applied.[49]

The Newsweek cover indeed has within its structure such ideological themes. On a broad, archetypal level, the image of Zaun and its supporting text affirm the inevitability of war. "HARD DAYS AHEAD:" Without passion or protest, the cover declares the inescapable ritual of suffering, the inevitability that young women and men like Jeffrey Zaun must be sacrificed to war. Zaun's bruised and battered face is price and proof; his anguish is testimony to the ineluctable fate prescribed for humankind.

On a more narrow level, the image serves an active ideological role. Preface and precursor, the image readies for the intensified war effort then anticipated almost any day. That is, the Newsweek cover prepares the ground for the ground war and further expansion of the military effort. "A Brutal War on the Ground?" asked the first subhead. And at the time, large number of Allied, particularly American, casualties seemed likely. Passing over the "hard days" already being endured by Iraqi civilians and soldiers, the cover suggests that those who gaze upon it prepare for days of American carnage.

Context shapes and supports this interpretation. Although not as memorable or controversial as the Zaun image, the two Newsweek covers after the onset of combat and before the Zaun cover can be seen too in part as ideological preparation for war. The Jan. 21 cover is filled by a U.S. military jet in flight, soaring out toward the reader, with the headline: "'We'll Win, but Why Rush?' By America's Most Decorated War Hero." The Jan. 28 cover is topped by a large, two-inch-tall headline, "America at War," and depicts a pilot in the cockpit of his aircraft, presumably American, with helmet on and gloved hand giving the "thumbs up." In concert, these covers can be understood as part of the rallying, acclamatory political discourse in a nation geared for war.

This interpretation also finds support from those, like Hall, who argue that the news media, while free of direct compulsion, have "freely articulated themselves systematically around definitions of the situation which favoured the hegemony of the powerful."[50] Or as one critic of Gulf War news coverage acidly affirmed, "Set in the depthless present, amid fake-perspective murals of a bogus past, journalism in times of war is mostly moral persuasion of the citizenry that the war is fought by decent people for honorable objectives."[51]

Summary

News photography has provided American readers with enduring images that confirm and maintain the rituals of a nation at war. Using insights from Barthes and Hall, this essay has argued that Newsweek's cover photograph of the battered face of Navy Lt. Jeffrey Zaun offered powerful and complex messages that may allow it to become one of the lasting images of the Persian Gulf War. The Zaun cover captures in a succinct image three themes: the human wages of war in high-tech combat; the ascendancy of broadcast news coverage and the changing role of print media, and the ideological preparation for war. Much more than a depiction of an injured prisoner of war, the Newsweek cover offers important insights into the distinctive and tumultuous social and political context that marked the Gulf War.

NOTES

1. See James Barron, "Iraqi TV Broadcasts Interviews with 7 Identified as Allied Pilots," New York Times, Jan. 21, 1991, p. A1; Alan Cowell, "Captured Airmen Moved to Targets," New York Times, Jan. 22, 1991, p. A1.

According to an exclusive report on "The CBS Evening News with Dan Rather" of March 11, 1991, Zaun said that some of his wounds were self-inflicted. He had hoped, the report said, that the Iraqis would not put him on television if it appeared he had been mistreated. The report was confirmed the next day by a Pentagon official. See Patrick E. Tyler, "American War Prisoners Abused by Iraqi Captors, Pentagon Says," New York Times, March 13, 1991, p. A13.

2. See Barron, op. cit.; Cowell, op. cit.; Maureen Dowd, "Bush Calls Iraqis 'Brutal' to Pilots," New York Times, Jan. 22, 1991, p. A10; Jill Smolowe, "Iraq's Horror Picture Show," Time, Feb. 4, 1991, pp. 34-35, and Tom Mathews, "Torture and Torment," Newsweek, Feb. 4, 1991, pp. 50-54.

3. "A Grim Photo," Newsweek, Feb. 25, 1991, p. 9.

4. Sharon A. Byrne, "Letters," Newsweek, Feb. 25, 1991, p. 8.

5. For example, the Philadelphia Inquirer said, "It was Zaun whose bruised and swollen face on the cover of Newsweek helped gird a nation for war. His wooden, wounded appearance on Iraqi television, where he mouthed anti-war sentiments, further outraged Americans against the enemy." Maureen Graham and Jeff Gammage, "For Zaun, Sweet Return," Philadelphia Inquirer, March 11, 1991, p. 9-A. The Washington Post also focused upon Zaun as the captives returned to the United States and said that Zaun's "swollen, battered face was seen in photographs around the world." Sun Anne Presley and Mary Jordan, "'Someday' Arrives for Former POWs," Washington Post, March 11, 1991, pp. A1, A16. Also see Time's full-page hologram of Zaun's face that ran on the same week as Newsweek's Zaun cover, Time, Feb. 4, 1991, p. 17.

6. As at least one author has argued, magazine photographs long have provided enduring images of wartime; indeed, many of the powerful photographs of the first so-called television war, in Vietnam, were originally published in news magazines. See Oscar Patterson III, "Television's Living Room War in Print: Vietnam in News Magazines," Journalism Quarterly 61:35-39 (Spring 1984); also see, K. Thompson and A. Clarke, "Photographic Imagery and the Vietnam War: An Unexamined Perspective," Journal of Psychology, 87:279-92 (1974).

7. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 28.

8. See Roy Blackwood, "International News Photos in U.S. and Canadian Papers," *Journalism Quarterly*, 64:195-99 (Spring 1987); Roy Blackwood, "The Content of News Photos Portrayed by Men and Women," *Journalism Quarterly*, 60:710-14 (Winter 1983); Garry Bryant, "Ten-Fifty P.I.: Emotion and the Photographer's Role," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 2:32-39 (Spring/Summer 1987); James Fosdick, "Picture of Content and Source in Four Daily Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly*, 46:368-71 (Summer 1969); Larry Leslie, "Newspaper Photo Coverage of Censure of McCarthy," *Journalism Quarterly*, 63:850-53 (Winter 1986); Edwin Martin, "Against Photographic Deception," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 2:49-59 (Spring/Summer 1987); Susan Miller, "The Content of News Photographs: Women's and Men's Roles," *Journalism Quarterly*, 52:70-75 (Spring 1975); Sandra Moriarty and Gina Garramone, "A Study of Newsmagazine Photographs of the 1984 Presidential Campaign," *Journalism Quarterly*, 63:728-34 (Winter 1986); Michael Singletary, "Newspaper Photography: A Content Analysis, 1936-76," *Journalism Quarterly*, 55:585-89 (Autumn 1978); Michael Singletary and Chris Lamb, "News Values in Award Winning Photos," *Journalism Quarterly*, 61:104-08 (Spring 1984); Guido H. Stempel III, "Visibility of Blacks in News and News-Picture Magazines," *Journalism Quarterly*, 48:337-39 (Summer 1971); Edward Trayes and Bruce Cook, "Picture Emphasis in Final Editions of 16 Dailies," *Journalism Quarterly*, 54:595-99 (Autumn 1977); Kuo-jen Tsang, "News Photos in *Time* and *Newsweek*," *Journalism Quarterly*, 61:578-84 (Autumn 1984); Lesley Wischmann, "Dying on the Front Page: Kent State and the Pulitzer Prize," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 2:67-74 (Spring/Summer 1987).

9. Michael D. Sherer, "Vietnam War Photos and Public Opinion," *Journalism Quarterly*, 66:391-395, 530 (Summer 1989).

10. Thompson and Clarke, *op. cit*.

11. Patterson, *op. cit*., p. 39.

12. Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," in *Image, Music, Text*, Stephen Heath, trans. and ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp. 32-51.

13. Roland Barthes, "The Photographic Message," in *Image, Music, Text*, pp. 15-31.

14. *Ibid*., pp. 15-16. As Barthes wrote elsewhere, "The variation in readings is not, however, anarchic; it depends on the different kinds of knowledge -- practical, national, cultural, aesthetic -- invested in the image and these can be classified, brought into a typology." Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," p. 46.

15. Roland Barthes, "Myth Today," in *Mythologies*, Annette Lavers, trans. (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1972), pp. 116-159.

16. See Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," pp. 32-51; and Barthes, "The Third Meaning: Research Notes on Some Eisenstein Stills," *Image, Music, Text*, pp. 52-68.

17. Stuart Hall, "The Determination of News Photographs," in Stanley Cohen and Jock Young, eds., *The Manufacture of News* (Beverly Hills: SAGE, 1981), p. 226. Hall also touches upon the interpretation of news images in "The Social Production of News," in Stuart Hall, ed., *Policing the Crisis* (London: Macmillan, 1978), pp. 53-77; "Encoding/Decoding," in The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *Culture, Media, Language* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), pp. 128-38; "The Rediscovery of 'Ideology': Return of the Repressed in Media Studies," in Michael Gurevitch, Tony Bennett, James Curran, Janet Woollacott, eds., *Culture, Society and the Media* (London: Methuen, 1982), pp. 56-90.

18. Hall, "The Determination of News Photographs," p. 227.

Citing both Hall and Barthes, Todd Gitlin makes a similar point in analyzing news photography of the 1965 march on Washington to end the war in Vietnam. See Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 47-52.

19. Hall, "The Determination of News Photographs," p. 231.

20. Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," pp. 40-41 and Hall, "The Determination of News Photographs," p. 229.

21. Hall, "The Determination of News Photographs," p. 229.

22. Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," p. 39; Barthes, "The Photographic Message," p. 26.

23. The headlines also worked on a connative level. As will be discussed below, the typography and design components of the headlines were also important to interpretations of the cover.

24. Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," p. 42.

25. Hall, "The Determination of News Photographs," p. 231.

26. *Ibid*., p. 226.

27. *Ibid*., p. 238.

28. Barthes, "Myth Today," p. 143; Hall, "The Determination of News Photographs," p. 241.

29. Barthes, "Myth Today," p. 156.

30. "A Grim Photo," *Newsweek*, Feb. 25, 1991, p. 9.

31. Hall, "The Determination of News Photographs," p. 231.

32. "A Grim Photo," Newsweek, Feb. 25, 1991, p. 9; also see Barron, op. cit.; Cowell, op. cit.; Dowd, op. cit.; Smolowe, op. cit., and Mathews, op. cit.

33. Tom Morganthau, "Americans Hunker Down," Newsweek, Feb. 4, 1991, p. 26.

34. Newsweek anticipated the charge of demonizing Hussein. "It may be true, as historians say, that the tendency to demonize the enemy is a regrettable byproduct of modern war," the lead story began. "But in the escalating conflict along the Persian Gulf, it seemed, the enemy was willing to demonize himself." "The Rising Storm," Newsweek, Feb. 4, 1991, p. 22.

35. "A Grim Photo," Newsweek, Feb. 25, 1991, p. 9.

36. See Barron, op. cit.; Cowell, op. cit.; Dowd, op. cit.; Smolowe, op. cit., and Mathews, op. cit.

37. See Richard Zoglin, "Live from the Middle East," Time, Jan. 28, 1991, pp. 69-71; Maureen Dowd, "Washington Goes to War, Besieging the TV Set," New York Times, Jan. 29, 1991, p. A13;

38. Richard Zoglin, "Volleys on the Information Front," Time, Feb. 4, 1991, pp. 44-45; Jonathan Alter, "Does Bloody Footage Lose Wars," Newsweek, Feb. 11, 1991. p. 38; "Peter Arnett, from Baghdad," Newsweek, Feb. 11, 1991, pp. 36-38; Richard Zoglin, "Just Whose Side Are They On?" Time, Feb. 25, 1991, pp. 52-55.

39. "Operation Desert Shield Ground Rules," Directorate of Defense Information, Department of Defense, Washington, D.C., Jan. 14, 1991.

40. "Guidelines for News Media," Directorate of Defense Information, Department of Defense, Washington, D.C., Jan. 14, 1991.

41. See Barron, op. cit.; Cowell, op. cit.; Dowd, op. cit.; Smolowe, op. cit., and Mathews, op. cit.

42. For example, Time found that 88 percent of its sample believed that "censorship is necessary" for reports coming out of the Middle East, and that "despite this censorship," 79 percent thought they were "getting enough information about the war." See Zoglin, "Volleys on the Information Front," p. 45.

43. Elain Sciolino, "Voice of the Pentagon Delivers Press Curbs With a Deftness Honed on TV," New York Times, Feb. 8, 1991, p. A9; Robin Toner, "The Senator, the Press and Crossed Swords," New York Times, Feb. 12, 1991, p. A14; R.W. Apple Jr., "Pentagon Moves to Widen Reporters' Access to Gulf Ground Units," New York Times, Feb. 13, 1991, p. A15; Richard L. Berke, "Pentagon Defends Coverage Rules, While Admitting to Some Delays," New York Times, Feb. 21, 1991, p. A14, and Walter Cronkite, "What Is There to Hide?" Newsweek, Feb. 25, 1991, p. 43.

But also see Alexander Cockburn's observation that "febrile discussion of the minutiae of war coverage -- how much censorship in Riyadh, how much lying in the Pentagon briefing room -- itself acts as a form of censorship, for it too avoids history." Alexander Cockburn, "The Press and the 'Just War,'" The Nation, Feb. 18, 1991, p. 186.

44. Barthes, "The Photographic Message," pp. 30-31; "Myth Today," pp. 142-43; "Rhetoric of the Image," pp. 42-46.

45. Debra Gersh, "Where's the Beef?" Editor & Publisher, Jan. 26, 1991, pp. 9-10, 26; Debra Gersh, "Trouble Among the Press Ranks," Editor & Publisher, Feb. 9, 1991, pp. 9, 46; "War Coverage," Editor & Publisher, Feb. 9, 1991, pp. 10, 39; Richard Zoglin, "How Dailies Cover a TV War," Time, Feb. 11, 1991, p. 78.

46. Hall, "The Determination of News Photographs," p. 226.

47. Ibid., p. 239.

48. Ibid.

49. Barthes, "Myth Today," pp. 116-59; Hall, "The Determination of News Photographs," p. 240.

50. Hall, "The Rediscovery of 'Ideology,'" p. 86.

51. Cockburn, "The Press and the 'Just War,'" p. 186.

Determinants of International News Reporting in the U.S.

by

Ali N. Mohamed
School of Journalism
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Illinois 62901-6601

Paper presented to the International Communication Division,
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication,
annual convention, Boston 1991.

Abstract

Notwithstanding the volume of research material on determinants of international news reporting, disturbing inconsistencies in the delineated relationships still remain. The explanations furnished on the shifting foci of news attention have clearly been inadequate. For instance, are economic, political, and sociological variables more useful than psychological ones?

An important distinction was drawn between "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" variables. "Intrinsic" variables pertain to properties that are central to the meanings of events (e.g., conflict) since they serve to define newsworthiness itself; whereas "extrinsic" variables are external to the meanings of events described in news (e.g., cultural affinity, trade, etc.).

By using Edelstein's (1984) "problematic situation" variables, data representing one constructed month in 1986 was gathered from five regional U.S. newspapers.

Extrinsic variables such as cultural affinity were found to be useful determinants of the nature of coverage. Intrinsic variables (the problematic situations), however, were more important in determining the volume of coverage.

News of Western Europe, for example, was characterized less by such problematic situations as institutional breakdowns, loss of value, need for value, and indeterminacy. The farther a country was on the affinity dimension the greater the magnitude in which problematic situations occurred in the news.

This is consistent with the structural theory of news proposed by Galtung and Ruge (1965). The data also corroborate some of the arguments raised by spokesmen of the developing world during the row over a "new information order."

Determinants of International News Reporting in the U.S.

INTRODUCTION

Although a sizable literature on American newspaper editors' decisions to report international news has accumulated over the years, there are some inconsistencies in the delineated relationships between coverage and the factors on which it is contingent.

The purpose of this study is to redefine the independent variables and consequently, reformulate theory as a means of achieving relative consistency in explanation. The aim in restructuring existing models of explanation and prediction regarding media content is two-fold: (1) to propose and test new explanations of the presumed relationship between coverage and various independent variables, and (2) revisit the "New Information Order" debate and the international row over the content of Western media in hopes of placing some aspects of that debate in theoretic perspective.

The lack of consistent direction in theory development has been blamed on differential conceptualizations of the problem. Rosengren (1974) for instance, criticized Galtung and Ruge's (1965) psychological variables as both inadequate and inappropriate. He suggested the replacement of the psychological variables with an "economic, political, and sociological theory" of the flow of international news (p.154).

The merits of Rosengren's proposal, however, are yet to materialize in terms of a clearer understanding of the economic, political and sociological forces that interact to shape the content of the media. While many reasons for this shortfall in the potency of the theories on reporting could be listed, two main areas will be pursued in this study: (1) the distinction between micro- and macrosociological approaches toward the study of content; (2) the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic properties of news events.

As in most social science disciplines, communication research has been carried on within the philosophical confines of two schools of thought. These research traditions differ generally by the scope of the analytic frameworks they adopt (Rogers, 1982). The one tradition, exemplified by scholars of the Frankfurt school, is given to adopting broad frameworks; while others such as those of the empirical school adopt relatively narrower approaches.

In the discussion of content of the media, the implications of this difference in approach is rarely acknowledged. McLeod and Blumler (1987:274) proffered a warning about this: one disadvantageous tendency of scholars is "'system-jumping'--using a concept defined at one level of analysis as an explanation at another."

However, even within the empirical tradition, an important question that has strong implications for theory is the distinction between intrinsic vs. extrinsic properties of news. An event may merit attention either because of its inherent characteristics (e.g., conflict) or because of properties not inherent in the event (geographic proximity, volume of trade, etc.). Most studies of the factors influencing coverage ignore this distinction and discuss all these variables under one classification. Galtung and Ruge (1965) for example, incorporated both elitism of monitored nations and negativity of events in their theory of news structure. Similarly, Chang, Shoemaker and Brendlinger (1987) suggest that, among the strongest predictors of coverage are an event's normative deviance and the geographic proximity of the country covered by the media.

While this "eclectic" approach may be safe and sound in some respects, the endeavor to lay the groundwork for theory construction may be better served if we become cognizant of the distinct properties of different news events.

These conceptual problems are part of the reason why many studies of international news reporting fail to yield results that are consistent with one another. Even a cursory survey of the literature will reveal a gap in our understanding of the relative importance of each news determinant under given circumstances. For instance, Kariel and Rosenvall (1984) assert that eliteness of a nation is "the most important criterion for news selection." Chang et al. (1987), on the other hand, would disagree, arguing instead that the intrinsic characteristics of an event (its normative deviance) would be the strongest predictor. Similarly, one study of prestige U.S. newspapers (Hart, 1966) showed that there was a preference for Far Eastern and Southeast Asian news over Western Hemisphere or European news. Another study of U.S. papers (Potter, 1987), however, found that West European news was stressed more than that of any other region.

A separate analysis of the independent variables would advance our understanding of the relative importance of each and the effects of possible covariation or interaction among certain variables. In the preceding example about the seemingly haphazard U.S. attention to different regions of the world, the answer could lie in the predictive value of the nature of events taking place (e.g., conflict in the form of the Vietnam War) and not in the importance of either geographic or even cultural proximity.

In order to determine the relative importance of various independent variables, Edelstein's (1984) "new variables" are borrowed. Rather than the usual topical categorization of news, Edelstein sought to define events behaviorally in terms of "problematic situations." Topical categories, although easily identifiable in theory, were found to be conceptually fluid (Schramm and Atwood, 1981). A topical category such as economics, for example, may not be perceived as such by different respondents. Or it may not retain its meaning over time. Hence the need to define events behaviorally and as "problematic situations." Edelstein, Ito and Kepplinger (1989) suggest that such a definition of events could be conceived in terms of: (1) loss of value, (2) need for value, (3) indeterminacy, (4) institutional breakdown, (5) proposal of solutions, (6) conflict, and (7) blocking.

These are inherent attributes of news that cut across all topical categories. In proposing this conceptual scheme, Edelstein (1984) argued that it is more beneficial to theory development because it is anchored in more profound meanings of events. And McComb's (1989) endorsement of this analytic tool is indicative of an emerging consensus about the utility of the approach: "The concept of problematic situations offers a systematic approach to the daily behavior of the news media. It offers a road map, a general theory, guiding us beyond the morass of specific events and topics covered in the daily news" (p. xvii).

This study is warranted also by a more conspicuous, if less tenable, reason--implications for the "effects" of content. Although McQuail (1981) warned against the assumption that exposure to content equals effects, one is nevertheless drawn to speculate about possibilities of such effects, at least at the cognitive level. This is especially relevant with regard to developing world complaints about the content of Western media. The complaints, which initially may have been made on little more than a hunch, are now harder to dismiss because of empirical corroboration of some allegations. Perry's (1987) analysis of how an "image gap" about developed and undeveloped countries evolves from exposure to international news, lends support to one side of the argument. The author observed that:

> ...even equally unrepresentative news about developing and developed societies may contribute to a gap in the accuracy of the images people in the U.S. have about the two groups of countries. Such news may lower the accuracy

> of judgments about developing countries more than it reduces the accuracy of inferences about developed countries(p.417).

This differential perceptions of nations (based perhaps more directly on a cultural affinity dimension) and the parallel charges of negative portrayal of the developing world, are at the core of the proposed theoretic model aimed at explaining the interaction between affinity and the problematic situations addressed in the news. By invoking the concept of news threshold (Galtung and Ruge, 1965) it is hypothesized that relatively higher threshold levels for news of culturally distant nations produces the preponderance of "bad" news, represented primarily in such problematic situations as conflict, loss of value, need for value, indeterminacy, and institutional breakdown (Edelstein et al. 1989: 120-124).

LITERATURE REVIEW

One main difference in the approaches toward the study of content is the level at which problems are analyzed. While some scholars have sought explanations at a macrosociological level (Altschull, 1984; Gitlin, 1980; Halloran, 1980; Bennett, 1982) others have opted for a microsociological approach (Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Hester, 1971; Rosengren, 1974; etc.).

The adoption of macroscopic approaches in social science scholarship grew out of the idea of society as organism, which was widely used as an analytic tool by pioneer sociologists. The holistic theory of society gained credence because of the observation of a harmonious existence of the whole in spite of a differentiated existence of the parts.

Many contemporary scholars of communication clearly have been influenced by this analytic framework. Marcuse (1964) observes that under the guise of public service, the media present a picture of the world that conforms to the established interests of those who wield economic power. Gerbner and Gross (1976) go a step further by suggesting that content of the media (especially TV) is used by power elites to perpetrate symbolic meanings that legitimize the prevailing social order.

But Shoemaker and Mayfield (1987), among others, repeatedly remind us of the methodological hazards of adopting social systems as a unit of analysis and drawing conclusions therefrom about content of the media. A more fruitful study of content, they argue, is one that is based on the realization that there could be greater variations within a system than between systems.

One major disadvantage of a system-level analysis is that it buries a multitude of variables that directly or indirectly affect content of media. Many of these variables could be classified under the five broad categories developed by Shoemaker and Mayfield (1987). From the existing body of knowledge about content, the authors deduce the following premises: (1) content reflects social reality with little or no distortion, (2) content is a function of media routines, (3) content is influenced by journalists' socialization and attitudes, (4) content results from social and institutional forces working on it, and (5) content is a function of ideological positions and a tool of the status quo.

Determinants of International News Coverage.

Although Gans (1979:32) argues that "foreign news deals with the same kinds of people and activities as domestic news," there is strong evidence in the literature that an additional set of priorities apply in the selection of stories about foreign events. As Gerbner and Marvanyi (1977:52) report, "when the subject is foreign news, the process is more variable."

In the interest of parsimony, the variables related to international news content could be grouped into three categories: (1) content as a function of the monitored country or region, (2) content as a function of U.S. involvement in the news, and (3) content as a function of the intrinsic properties of events.

(1) Content as a function of monitored country. The quantity and quality of coverage that individual nations receive in the media of another country have been linked to various characteristics of the monitored nation. Studies have established the link between coverage and such variables as cultural affinity, political ties, volume of trade, geographic proximity, eliteness, and population size.

Galtung and Ruge (1965) hypothesized that news of a culturally close nation will be subjected to less rigid newsworthiness criteria than news of a culturally distant nation.

Another variable that affects coverage is geographic proximity. McLean and Pinna (1958) indicated that there is an inverse correlation between distance and level of interest; that is, the greater the distance, the less the interest. Schramm's (1980) study of Asian dailies showed that regional news was allotted the most space. Skurnik (1978) reported that an African newspaper pays more attention to Africa than to any other region. And McNeeley and Izcaray (1986:548) found that a Latin American paper devoted the greatest coverage to "other countries within the region."

Media also report on foreign countries because of the volume of trade with the mother country. Rosengren and Rikardson (1974) contend that trade is a more important predictor of coverage than population size. Other studies, however, have cast doubt on the influence of trade on media coverage. A study of Canadian newspapers (Robinson and Sparkes, 1976) showed that many countries received far more or far less coverage than was warranted by the volume of their trade with Canada. Similarly, Atwood (1985:2) reports that "news does not necessarily follow trade."

It is worth noting that all of the preceding variables are both macroscopic and extrinsic. Trade, geographic proximity, political system, and cultural affinity are system-level variables.

(2) Content as a function of U.S. involvement. Self-involvement as a theme is so pervasive in international news that Elliott and Golding (1973) suggest that predominantly, international news is either "foreign news at home" or "home news abroad." This is consistent with the findings of many studies. An analysis of a foreign news radio program in Britain (Harrison, 1986) showed that Britain was the principal actor in 50 percent of the news items. In the U.S., Peterson (1979:120) found that "the majority of foreign news is in reality domestic news about foreign countries." Gans (1979:31) sees foreign news as a cross-boundary extension of domestic news: "Like domestic news, foreign news is concerned largely with the nation." Significantly, Chang et al. (1987:410) state that, for The New York Times, "involvement of the U.S. in the events...is the best discriminator of international news coverage."

(3) Content as a function of intrinsic properties of events. Textbooks on reporting and editing traditionally offer a list of the inherent characteristics of news events that help to distinguish them from the multitude of other routinely occurring events that go unreported in the media. The list, which has become almost standard, includes impact, oddity, importance, interest, conflict, timeliness, and controversy (Harris et al. 1977; Dennis and Ismach, 1981).

In his discussion of values in reporting, Gans (1979) refers to topical and enduring qualities of news. He explains that, "enduring values...affect what events become news, for some are part and parcel of the definition of news" (p.41). Chang et al. (1987) write of two categorization schemes in reporting that "differ in theoretical and operational dimensions" (p.400). In the context-oriented approach, international news coverage is studied in relation to "contextual factors" like volume of trade, cultural affinity, geographic proximity, etc. In the event-oriented approach, "some characteristics inherent in foreign events, tend to determine whether a foreign news event will be covered in the mass media."

However, the most elaborate study of a news event's inherent qualities was perhaps undertaken by Edelstein (1984). Concerned about validity problems caused by different conceptualizations of "problematic situations" (by public opinion pollsters, their respondents, and readers), the author suggested that content of the media be either "behaviorally defined" or "topically defined." This is necessary because topically defined categories "are likely to change over time" while behavioral concepts "retain their meaning over time" (p.6). Edelstein suggests that problematic situations could be behaviorally defined in terms of: (1) loss of value, (2) need for value, (3) institutional breakdown, (4) social conflict, (5) proposal of solutions, (6) indeterminacy, and (7) blocking.

Loss of value is a present-past temporal condition that represents diminished capacity for accomplishing an objective or losses of material assets.

Need for value is a present-past temporal condition in which an individual, group or state aspires to acquire something that was lacking heretofore. It is a "problem-solving orientation" (Edelstein, 1984).

Indeterminacy is the "lack of clarity; conditions of uncertainty; confusion..." (Atwood, 1987). It is, in other words, a problem of ambiguity in defining goals and pursuing their realization.

Institutional breakdown is "loss of value at the institutional level" (Edelstein et al. 1989:74). It is the erosion of the problem-solving capability of an institution; something that the institution adequately handled in the past, but of which it is no longer capable. It is also conceived on a past-present temporal dimension.

Blocking refers to instances where a course of action is either interrupted or halted by an actor. Generally, conflict scenarios are preceded immediately by acts of blocking (Edelstein et al. 1989).

Proposal of solutions represents demands made in efforts to alleviate a problematic situation.

Conflict refers to conditions arising from interactions between two or more parties with incompatible aims.

The usefulness of this categorization scheme is underscored by the broad range of topically-defined subjects to which each problematic situation potentially applies. Conflict, for instance, could refer to anything from armed confrontation, to an acrimonious debate over policy, to trade relationships between countries that are otherwise allies.

The newsroom adage, "bad news is good news" is indicative of the importance editors attach to an event's intrinsic qualities. Galtung and Ruge (1965:70) have drawn a durable theoretic proposition from this theme: "the more negative the event is in its consequences, the more probable that it will become a news item."

In international news reporting, the inherent characteristics of an event as determinant of coverage has received less attention than it deserves.

Conflict in International News. Among the intrinsic properties of news, conflict easily outdistances others in terms of ubiquity and attention from students of media content. Arno (1984) has represented the media as the "tertius gaudens" in Simmel's (1955) discussion of conflict situations. When two parties are locked in conflict, a third party is inevitably thrust into a position of power vis-a-vis the protagonists. Arno argues that the media thrive on conflict because "their very existence is defined by conflict participation" (1984:231).

Some of the "deviance" measures developed by Shoemaker et al. (1986) are essentially a redefinition of conflict. The two forms of deviance that best predicted coverage, according to Shoemaker et al. (1986), were "normative deviance" and "potential for social change deviance." A common example of these deviance measures offered by the authors is "acts of terrorism"--the epitome of conflict.

News Threshold and Cultural Affinity.

In their seminal study on international news, Galtung and Ruge (1965:66) explain that "there is a threshold an event will have to pass before it will be recorded at all." Threshold is conceptualized in terms of the intensity of the event--both absolute and incremental.

The requirement that events should clear a certain threshold in order to become news applies to international as well as domestic news coverage. In theory, no foreign news story will clear this threshold so long as there is a domestic event of similar or greater "weight" in terms of meaningfulness, consonance, importance and intensity (Scolnick, 1974; Gans, 1979). Also, the further the event is from the center of the news medium's operation, the heavier it should weigh to clear the threshold. This proposition sounds commonsensical, but it bears the blueprint for explaining the Western media's concentration on "negative" events in developing countries.

Illustrations of the threshold phenomenon in operation abound. The Ethiopian tragedy of 1984-85 has been blamed partly on tardy international reaction to the regions' serious food shortages: "By the time that we in the West were eventually moved by television, it was...far too late to save the lives of the tens of thousands who had already died" (Harrison and Palmer, 1986). However, it was not so much a world-wide indifference to the Ethiopian tragedy as it was the failure of the initial stages of the crisis to cross a certain threshold of newsworthiness for Western media (Kalter, 1986).

News of other parts of the world is subject to the same rules. Lamenting the minuscule attention Latin America receives in the U.S., Markham (1960:249) pointed out that "it takes a revolution to get Latin America in the news." Gans (1979:35) concurs that "foreign conflicts must be more dramatic and usually more violent than their domestic equivalents in order to break into the news."

What an event "weighs," however, is predicated on numerous considerations. Gans' (1979:36) statement in regard to this is as encompassing as it is simple: "Generally the farther from America the country is geographically, politically, culturally, or racially, the larger the number of victims necessary for the story to receive attention."

Thus the interaction between affinity and relative levels of threshold affects both the nature of content and the range of topics it may incorporate. It is the interaction between cultural affinity and the requirements of newsworthiness that is responsible for the preponderance of "negative" Third World news in U.S. and Western media in general. But the assumption that "bad" news is relayed only in connection with the Third World is erroneous. Negative events in industrialized Western nations receive at least as much attention (Pittatore, 1982; Harrison, 1986).

But because of relatively lower threshold levels for news of culturally close developed countries, there is bound to be a "varied mix" of reporting not characteristic of Third World news. Moreover, Bell (1983) found that news of the "South" was sometimes distorted--deliberately, the author claims--in order to deepen the negativity effect. Although it is true, therefore, that "bad" news is not reserved for the Third World, we may not be able to deny that the Third World is reserved for "bad" news. As Harrison (1986:421) put it, "The problem of Third World reporting is not the attention given to wars, revolutions, civil strife and corruption, but the absence of positive items."

The foregoing review of literature allows us to hypothesize the following:

H 1: "Intrinsic variables" account for greater variance in the dependent variable (coverage) than "extrinsic variables."

H 2: Conflict accounts for greater variance in the dependent variable than any intrinsic variable.

H 3: The more distant a country is on an affinity scale, the higher the threshold of its news will be.

H 4: There is an inverse relationship between affinity and conflict, loss of value, need for value, indeterminacy, institutional breakdowns, proposal of solutions, and blocking.

H 5: The greater the number of problematic situations addressed in the news, the greater the coverage.

H 6: The greater the number of problematic situations addressed in the news, the more prominent the coverage.

METHOD

A constructed month in 1986 was used to generate the data from five regional U.S. newspapers. The papers chosen for analysis are: the Denver Post, the San Francisco Chronicle, Louisville Courier Journal, The Miami Herald, and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Dates comprising the composite month were randomly selected. Thus five Mondays, five Tuesdays, five Wednesdays, etc., were selected from the 365 days of the year. Sundays were excluded because of the repetitive nature of the content of weekend papers.

The entire item was used as a unit of analysis. Berelson (1952) observed that smaller units not only take more time to code but that they also fail to provide the benefit of higher reliability agreements. The promise of a maximal cost-benefit ratio dictated the choice of the item as the unit of analysis.

The categorization scheme involved 27 variables. The major variables are:

Trade. Census data was used to rank-order countries according to volume of trade with the U.S.

Geographic proximity was measured in miles between the U.S. city and the foreign city mentioned in the story dateline. Distances were obtained from Fitzpatrick and Modlin (1986).

Language. All countries were divided into native English speakers, English-and-other-language speakers, and no-English speakers.

Social distance constitutes the other dimension of cultural affinity besides language. It refers to "the degree of sympathetic understanding that functions between groups" (Catapusan, 1954:309). The social distance hierarchy relative to the U.S. is topped by Western Europe, followed by Latin America/the Middle East/East Europe, the Far East, Southeast Asia, and Africa (Chang, Pollick and Lee, 1989).

Political system. All countries were classified according to Gastil's (1988) comparative survey of freedom as either "free," "partly free," or "not free." Countries most similar to the U.S. (those that are "free") received the highest score of 3.

Involvement of the U.S. in the events described in the news was rated on the basis of how much it may affect the status quo of the foreign country concerned. Thus classifications of involvement ranged from "very much" (3) to "not at all" (1). If there was no U.S. involvement, a zero was recorded.

Categories defining Edelstein et al.'s (1989) problematic situations were measured on a uniform scale. The intensity and/or magnitude levels in which problematic situations occurred in the news were recorded as affecting more than one nation (3), an entire nation (2), or groups or individuals within a country (1). The problematic situations are: conflict, loss of value, need for value, indeterminacy, institutional breakdown, proposal of solutions, and blocking.

Two categories were created to complement the problematic situations. Reports of cooperation between nations and achievement by individuals and/or nations were measured dichotomously.

FINDINGS

The study period of five constructed weeks in 1986 involving five U.S. newspapers yielded 2,413 items. These include 2046 straight news items, 72 editorials, 97 opinion columns, 59 news analyses, 100 features, and 39 letters to the editor.

Some pieces of information could not be recorded for items on international organizations such as the United Nations and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). No determination was made on such variables as cultural affinity and geographic proximity regarding items about international actors that do not possess a clear identity of such variables.

Intracoder reliability was .94 at the beginning of coding and .90 toward the end of coding. Intercoder reliability between three other judges was .88.

The first hypothesis, which posits that intrinsic variables explain more variance than extrinsic variables, was tested by running two restricted regression equations of a full regression model. Each set of predictor variables was held constant at a time. The sizes of the resulting R^2 values are .0263 for the extrinsic variables and .1078 for the intrinsic variables. Both sets of predictors contributed significantly to the variance in the dependent variable (see Tables 1 and 2). Comparison of the two R^2 values yielded a studentized t-value of 5.96 which is significant at the .005 level, therefore supporting the hypothesis.

(Tables 1 and 2 about here)

Hypothesis 2 states that conflict is a better predictor of coverage than other intrinsic variables. The hypothesis was tested by running regression models in which each intrinsic variable was controlled. The contribution of each variable to the total variance accounted for in the dependent variable was determined from the reduction in the value of R^2 and the significance of the F-ratio. In contravention of the hypothesis, conflict does not explain more variance in coverage than other intrinsic variables. In fact, the contribution of conflict is not significant (see Table 3). This observation was borne out also by a stepwise regression analysis (both forward selection and backward elimination procedures). Problematic situations possessing higher predictive powers include need for value, indeterminacy, proposal of solutions, and institutional breakdowns.

(Table 3 about here)

The mean score of the composite variable 'threshold' were computed for each one of the five social distance groups in order to test the hypothesis that, news of culturally distant countries crosses higher thresholds of newsworthiness than does news of culturally close countries (hypothesis 3). Threshold scores were pooled from the intensity levels in which intrinsic variables occurred in the news. In the analysis of variance performed to test whether means differed in the hypothesized direction, ($M_1>M_2>M_3>M_4>M_5$), a significant F-ratio was obtained. (F=7.0864; p=.00001) (see Table 4).

(Table 4 about here)

Orthogonal comparisons between pairs of means yielded two significant and two non-significant F-ratios. Contrasts between Africa and Central and Southeast Asia, and between Latin America and Western Europe were statistically significant. There are no differences between Central/Southeast Asia and the Far East, and between the Far East and Latin America/Mid-East (see Table 5).

(Table 5 about here)

But a post-hoc comparison of all the 10 different pairs of means indicates a general support of the hypothesis as only three pairs of means are statistically equal to one another. The mean threshold score of nations in the highest social distance group, for example, is statistically smaller than the means of every one of the four lower affinity groups. The three equal pairs of means represent Central and Southeast Asia, the Far East and Latin America/the Middle East.

Thus news of countries closest to the U.S. on social distance cleared lower threshold levels of newsworthiness in receiving coverage in the U.S.

Hypothesis four was tested in two ways. A correlation matrix with one independent variable (affinity) and seven dependent variables (conflict, loss, need, indeterminacy, institutional breakdown, solutions, and blocking) was computed (see Table 6). All the hypothesized relationships are supported by the data. As stated in the hypothesis, the relationships are all negative; they are also statistically significant. This means that, as affinity of monitored nation goes up, the presence of problematic situations goes down.

(Table 6 about here)

The relationship between affinity and problematic situations in the news were tested using chi-square as well. All seven tables have significant chi -square values.

Loss of value, for example, is disproportionately reported in connection with news of the various regions of the world. Seventy-two percent of the news of the lowest affinity nations relayed losses of value that affected either an entire nation or more than one nation. In contrast, there was no loss of value of any magnitude reported in 53.6 percent of the news of the highest affinity countries (see Table 7).

(Table 7 about here)

In the case of institutional breakdowns, 54.3 percent of the coverage of countries in the lowest affinity group carried reports of breakdowns affecting an entire nation. Such reports represented only 4 percent of the coverage of countries in the highest affinity group. Indeed, 64.7 percent of the coverage of high affinity countries did not report institutional breakdown of any magnitude (see Table 8).

(Table 8 about here).

Similarly, 71.8 percent of the coverage of high affinity countries related no indeterminate situations, while 62.6 percent of the coverage of nations in the lowest affinity group reported indeterminate situations affecting one or more countries (see Table 9). There is a similar inverse relation between affinity and other problematic situations such as need for value, proposal of solutions, and blocking.

(Table 9 about here)

Incidences of the seven problematic situations in news items were aggregated for purposes of testing hypotheses five and six. Hypothesis five posits that, the greater the number of problematic situations addressed in the news, the greater the coverage. The correlation between coverage and number of problematic situations is positive and significant (see Table 10). The coefficient of correlation is .075 and is significant at the .001 level (p=.0001, n=2413). The hypothesis is thus supported.

(Table 10 about here)

Hypothesis six is tested in a similar manner. As hypothesized, the number of problematic situations addressed in the news is positively correlated with the prominence of coverage. The correlation between number of problematic situations and prominence is .0937, and is significant at the .001 level. The hypothesis is therefore supported.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In his acclaimed exposition on the proposed "new information order", Masmoudi (1979:174) lashed out at Western-based wire services and other media for presenting news of the developing world in "the most unfavorable light, stressing crises, strikes, street demonstrations, putches..." Others have made similar accusations (Nwosu, 1980; Savio, 1982).

The real bone of contention was the nature of the coverage developing nations received in the Western media. This was a normative problem to the extent that the disagreements hinged on what the definition of news should be (see, for example, Ngwa, 1989).

The withdrawal from Unesco by both the United States and the United Kingdom has been attributed largely to this philosophical split with developing nations (Radolf, 1989; Riffe and Mohamed, 1990). And although the debate stirred considerable diplomatic and political waves, communication scholars have yet to place any of the elements of the debate in theoretic context.

While the absence of theory may not have been responsible for the discord between the various sides over communication issues, it certainly contributed to the lack of understanding that characterized all the major episodes of the "dialogue" (Savio (1982).

A relevant theoretic model on international news reporting was developed by Galtung and Ruge (1965). The authors stressed the usefulness of cultural proximity as a determinant of the nature of coverage. The relation between affinity and news coverage can be discerned by observing the threshold levels that news of various societies has to cross. News of countries that are culturally close does not clear high threshold levels as the criteria of newsworthiness are liberally defined. But news of culturally distant countries will not register on the "news radar" unless it can clear high threshold levels of newsworthiness.

This aspect of Galtung and Ruge's structural theory of news was put to an empirical test in this study. It is also a test of a central premise in the "new information order" debate that the Western media, in their coverage of the developing world, have traditionally emphasized "the dramatic, the emotional and the amusing" (Rosenblum, 1977:825). The data bear out both Galtung and Ruge's theory and the complaints of Third World spokesmen.

A question related to the nature of news concerns the relative value of "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" variables as determinants of coverage. Edelstein (1984; and Edelstein et al., 1989) developed an elaborate framework in which "problematic situations" acquire clearly defined meanings. A coup in a Third World country may become newsworthy not only because one leader has been replaced by another, but also because of a "loss of value" in the form of human lives or property. It could also be reported because of an expressed "need for value," or a resultant "institutional breakdown," or the emergence of an unpredictable state of "indeterminacy." Unlike conventional categorization of news, Edelstein's scheme seeks to define events according to their meanings. The "new variables" thus lend stability to theory, and consequently, aid the cause of explanation.

This represents a new approach to examining the quality of news reported. about the world. And it transcends Stevenson's (1980) assertion that studying "the quantity and quality" of news about other parts of the world meant in part a consideration of "the range of topics covered in the foreign news" (p.11). In defense of the work of the four main international news agencies (AP, UPI, AFP, Reuters) Stevenson argued that there is "no evidence that any part of the world is held up to an unusually unfavorable light" (p.15). But if Stevenson's topically-oriented study was intended to examine the "quality" of international news, as the author insists it was, questions about its validity can clearly be raised. As a methodological instrument it falls short of capturing the "qualitative sphere" in which mediated images lie (Nordenstreng, 1985).

In general, the data of this study show that the presence of any two of the three factors addressed in the study guarantees quite extensive coverage in the U.S. press. The nature of coverage, though, depends on certain combina-

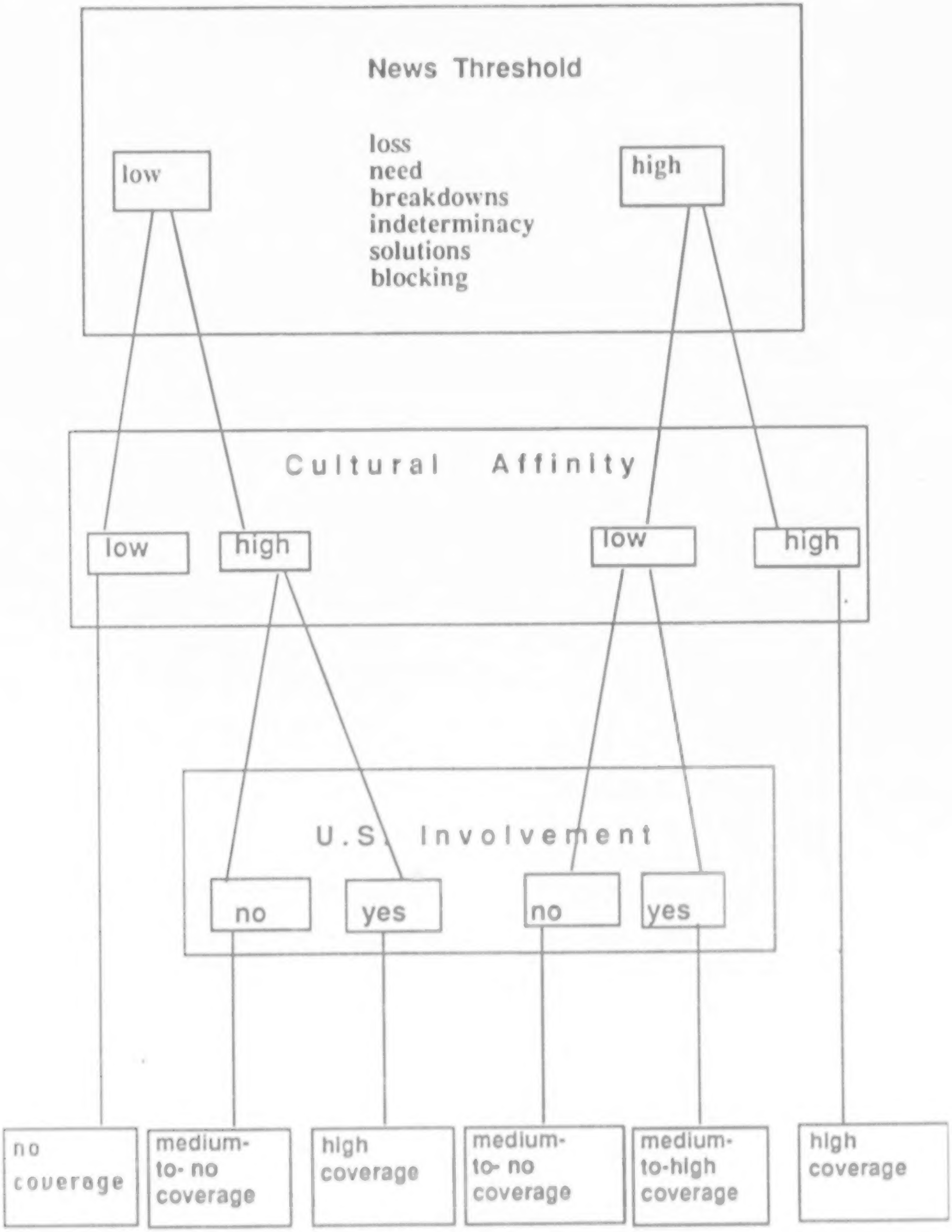

News Threshold
low
loss
need
breakdowns
indeterminacy
solutions
blocking
high
Cultural Affinity
low
high
low
high
U.S. Involvement
no
yes
no
yes
no coverage
medium-to-no coverage
high coverage
medium-to-no coverage
medium-to-high coverage
high coverage

Figure 1: Relationship between news threshold, cultural affinity, U.S. involvement, and relative amount of coverage.

tions of the factors. The three factors are (1) the magnitude in which problematic situations occur in news (threshold), (2) the cultural affinity of the monitored country with the U.S., and (3) the involvement of the United States in the events described.

Although cultural affinity does not lead to coverage by itself, it nevertheless interacts with U.S. involvement (in which case low news thresholds will suffice) or with high news threshold (in which case no U.S. involvement is necessary). Figure 1 attempts to present these relationships graphically.

References.

Altschull, J.H. (1984). Agents of Power: The Role of the News Media in Human Affairs. N.Y.: Longman.

Arno, A. (1984). "The News Media as Third Parties in National and International Conflict," pp. 229-238 in A. Arno and W. Dissanayake (eds.), The News Media in National and International Conflict. Boulder, CO.: Westview Press.

Atwood, E. (1985). "Who Covers Africa?" Paper presented to the International Communication Association, Honolulu.

Atwood, L.E. (1987). "News of U.S. and Japan in Each Others' Papers," Gazette 39:73-89.

Bell, A. (1983). "Telling it Like it Isn't: Inaccuracy in Editing International News." Gazette 31(3): 185-203.

Bennett, T. (1982). "Theories of the Media, Theories of Society," pp. 30-55 in M. Gurevitch, T. Bennett, J. Curran, and J. Woollacott (eds.), Culture, Society and the Media. London: Methuen.

Berelson, B. (1952). Content Analysis. Glencoe, Il.: Free Press.

Catapusan, B. (1954). "Social Distance in the Philippines," Sociology and Social Research 38(5):309-312.

Chang, T.K., Pollick, B. and lee, J. (1989). "Constructing the World: Newspaper Editors and Their World Views," Paper presented to the Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington.

Chang, T.K., Shoemaker, P. and Brendlinger, N. (1987). "Determinants of International News Coverage in the U.S. Media." Communication Research 14(4): 396-414.

Dennis, E. and Ismach, A. (1981). Reporting Processes and Practices. Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth.

Edelstein, A. (1984). "New Variables for the Study of Public Opinion and Communication About Social Problems." Paper presented to the International Communication Association, San Francisco.

Edelstein, A., Ito, Y. and Kepplinger, H. (1989). Communication and Culture: A Comparative Approach. N.Y.: Longman.

Elliott, P. and Golding, P. (1973). "The News Media and Foreign Affairs," in R. Boardman and A.J.R. Groom (eds.), The Management of Britain's External Relations. London: MacMillan.

Fitzpatrick, G. and Modlin, M. (1986). Direct-Line Distances. Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press.

Galtung, J. and Ruge, M. (1965). "The Structure of Foreign News," Journal of Peace Research 2(1): 64-91.

Gans, H. (1979). Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time. N.Y.: Pantheon Books.

Gerbner, G. and Gross, L. (1976)."Living with Television: the Violence Profile," Journal of Communication 26: 173-199.

Gerbner, G. and Marvanyi, G. (1977). "The Many Worlds of the World's Press," Journal of Communication 27(1): 52-66.

Gitlin, T. (1980). The Whole World is Watching. Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press.

Halloran, J. (1981). The Context of Mass Communication Research. Singapore: Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Center.

Harris, J., Leiter, K. and Johnson, S. (1977). The Complete Reporter. N.Y.: MacMillan.

Harrison, M. (1986). "A Window on the World?: Foreign Coverage by a British Radio Current Affairs Program," Critical Studies in Mass Communication 3:409-428.

Harrison, P. and Palmer, R. (1986). News Out of Africa. London: Hilary Shipman.

Hart, J. (1966). "Foreign News in U.S. and English Daily Newspapers: A Comparison," Journalism Quarterly 43:443-448.

Hester, A. (1971). "An Analysis of News Flow From Developed and Developing Countries," Gazette 17:29-43.

Kalter,J. (1986). "The Untold Stories of Africa: Why TV is Missing Some Big Ones," TV Guide 34(21): 2-12, May 24.

Kariel, H. and Rosenvall, L. (1984). "Factors Influencing International News Flow," Journalism Quarterly 61(3): 509-516, 666.

Marcuse, H. (1964). One-Dimensional Man. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Markham, J. (1961). "Foreign News in the U.S. and South American Press," Public Opinion Quarterly. 25:249-262.

Masmoudi, M. (1979). "The New World Information Order," Journal of Communication 29(2): 172-185.

McCombs, M. (1989). "Foreword" in A. Edelstein, Ito, Y. and H. Kepplinger, Communication and Culture: A Comparative Approach. N.Y.: Longman.

McLean, M. and Pinna, L. (1958). "Distance and News Interest: Scarpenia, Italy." Journalism Quarterly 35(1): 36-48.

McLeod, J. and Blumler, J. (1987). "The Macrosocial Level of Communication Science," pp. 271-322 in C. Berger, and S. Chaffee (eds.), Handbook of Communication Science. Beverly Hills, CA.: Sage.

McNeeley, J. and Izcaray, F. (1986). "International News Exposure and Images of Nations." Journalism Quarterly 63(3): 546-553.

McQuail, D. (1981). "The Influence and Effects of Mass Media," pp. 261-285 in M. Janowitz and P. Hirsch (eds.), Reader in Public Opinion and Mass Communication. N.Y.: The Free Press.

Ngwa, G. (1989). The Pan-African News Agency: A Regional Response to Global News Flow Problems. Unpublished Dissertation, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Nordenstreng, K. (1985). "Bitter Lessons," pp. 631-635 in M. Gurevitch and M. Levy (eds.), Mass Communication Review Yearbook 5. Beverly Hills, Ca.: Sage.

Nwosu, I. (1980). "Towards a New World Information Order: Recommendations Based on a Comparative Study of Selected Western Prestige Newspapers' Coverage of Black Africa," Media Asia 7(2): 81-90.

Perry, D. (1987). "The Image Gap: How International News Affects Perceptions of Nations," Journalism Quarterly. 64:416-421, 433.

Peterson, S. (1979). "Foreign News Gatekeepers and Criteria of Newsworthiness," Journalism Quarterly 56(1): 116-125.

Pittatore, O. (1982). "The Image of Italy in the New York Times: A 1980 Case Study," Master's Thesis, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Potter, J. (1987). "News From Three Worlds in Prestige U.S. Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly 64(1): 73-79.

Radolf, A. (1980). "Unesco Approves Communications Plan," Editor & Publisher. November 25, pp. 11-12.

Riffe, D. and Mohamed, A. (1990). "The Prestige Press Covers the U.S. Withdrawal from Unesco," Paper presented to the Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Minneapolis.

Robinson, G. and Sparkes, V. (1976)."International News in the Canadian and American Press: A Comparative News Flow Study." Gazette 22(4): 203-218.

Rogers, E. (1982). "The Empirical and the Critical Schools of Communication Research," pp. 125-144 in M. Burgoon (ed.), Communication Yearbook 5. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books.

Rosenblum, M. (1977). "Reporting From the Third World," Foreign Affairs 4:815-835.

Rosengren, K. (1974). "International News: Methods, Data and Theory," Journal of Peace Research 11(2): 145-156.

Rosengren, K. and Rikardson, G. (1974). "Middle East News in Sweden." Gazette 20:99-116.

Savio, R. (1980). "Why the World Needs aNew Information Order," Media Asia. 7(3): 145-149.

Schramm, W. (1980). "Circulation of News in the Third World: A Study of Asia," pp. 589-619 in G. Wilhoit, and H. deBock (eds.), Mass Communication Review Yearbook 1. Beverly Hills, CA.: Sage.

Schramm, W. and Atwood, E. (1981). Circulation of News in the Third World: A Study of Asia. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.

Scolnick, J. (1974). "An Appraisal of Studies of the Linkage Between Domestic and International Conflict," Comparative Political Studies 6(4): 485-509.

Shoemaker, P., Chang, T. and Brendlinger, N. (1986). "Deviance as a Predictor of Newsworthiness: Coverage of International Events in the U.S. Media," pp. 348-365 in M. McLaughlin (ed.), Communication Yearbook 10. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Shoemaker, P. and Mayfield, E. (1987). "Building a Theory of News Content: A Synthesis of Current Approaches," Journalism Monographs. No. 103.

Simmel, G. (1955 {1908}). Conflict: THe Web of Group Affiliations. N.Y.: Free Press.

Skurnik, W. (1978). "Foreign News Coverage in the Ivory Coast: A Statistical Profile of Fraternite-Matin," Gazette 24(4):271-282.

Stevenson, R. (1980). "The Western News Agencies Do Not Ignore the Third World." Editor & Publisher. July 5.

TABLE 1

ANOVA summary table for intrinsic variables.

Source	Df	SS	MS	F	Prob.	R^2
Model (Intr. Vars.)	10	76255.85	7625.58	28.20	.0001	.1078
Error	2334	631098.92	270.39			
Total	12344	707354.76				

TABLE 2

ANOVA summary table for extrinsic variables.

Source	Df	SS	MS	F	Prob.	R^2
Model (Extr.Var.)	5	18610.42	3722.08	12.64	.0001	.0263
Error	2339	688744.35	294.46			
Total	2344	707354.76				

TABLE 3

Summary of regression analysis for intrinsic variables.

Model	Variables included in model	Variables eliminated from model	R^2	Reduction in R-square	Df	F-ratio	Prob.
Full model	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10	------	.1078				
Restricted model 1	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10	Conflict	.1056	.0022	9,2402	.0540	.8162*
Restricted model 2	1,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10	Loss	.1034	.0044	9,2402	6.0255	.0142
Restricted model 3	1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10	Need	.0928	.0150	9,2402	34.4109	.0001
Restricted model 4	1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10	Institutional breakdown	.1029	.0049	9,2402	7.1956	.0074
Restricted model 5	1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10	Indeterminacy	.1005	.0073	9,2402	13.6459	.0002
Restricted model 6	1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10	Blocking	.1038	.0040	9,2402	4.8057	.0285
Restricted model 7	1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9,10	Solutions	.1012	.0066	9,2402	11.8714	.0006
Restricted model 8	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10	Involvement	.0829	.0149	9,2402	61.0078	.0001
Restricted model 9	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10	Achievement	.0738	.0340	9,2402	85.5110	.0001
Restricted model 10	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9	Cooperation	.1038	.0040	9,2402	4.9688	.0259

Note: The dependent variable is amount of coverage (N=2413). The full model and the 10 restricted models were constructed to test hypothesis 2.
1=conflict, 2=loss, 3=need, 4=institutional breakdown, 5=indeterminacy, 6=blocking, 7=proposal of solutions, 8=involvement, 9=achievement, 10=cooperation.
*Only conflict failed to contribute significantly over and above the contribution of other independent variables.

TABLE 4

Anova summary table for mean threshold scores of five social distance levels.

Source	Df	SS	MS	F	Prob.
Models	4	10.161	2.5403	7.09	.0000
Error	2385	854.9536	.3585		
Total	2389	865.1146			

TABLE 5

A priori comparisons between mean threshold scores for five social distance levels.

Contrasts	T-value	Df	Prob.
M_5 vs M_4 (W. Europe vs L.America)	-2.526	2385	.006
M_4 vs M_3 (L.America vs Far East)	.701	2385	.241
M_3 vs M_2 (Far East vs Central/S.E.Asia)	-.475	2385	.318
M_2 vs M_1 (Central/S.E.Asia vs Africa)	-3.082	2385	.001

TABLE 6

Correlations between affinity of monitored nation and problematic situations.

	Conflict	Loss of value	Need for value	Indeterminacy	Institutional breakdown	Solutions	Blocking
Cultural affinity	-.2453 p=.000	-.1899 p=.000	-.2533 p=.000	-.2558 p=.000	-.2896 p=.000	-.0424 p=.019	-.0923 p=.000

TABLE 10

Product-moment correlations between number of problematic situations and amount of coverage and prominence of news.

	Amount of coverage	Prominence
Number of problematic situations	.0750	.0937
	N=2413	N=2413
	p=.000	p=.000

TABLE 7

Affinity of monitored nation by loss of value.

	Loss of Value				
Affinity	0	1	2	3	Total
1	n=94	17	148	140	399
	r%=23.5	4.3	37.0	35.0	16.5
2	707	159	509	387	1762
	40.1	9.0	28.9	22.0	73.0
3	135	39	30	48	252
	53.6	15.5	11.9	19.0	10.4
Total	936	215	687	575	2413
	38.8	8.9	28.5	23.8	100.0

Pearson Chi-square = 120.600, Df=6, p=.00000

TABLE 8

Affinity of monitored nation by institutional breakdown

	Institutional breakdown				
Affinity	0	1	2	3	Total
1	n=87 r%=21.8	64 16.0	217 54.4	31 7.8	399 16.5
2	787 44.7	447 25.4	436 24.7	92 5.2	1762 73.0
3	163 64.7	75 29.8	10 4.0	4 1.6	252 10.4
Total	1037 43.0	586 24.3	663 27.5	127 5.3	2413 100.0

Pearson Chi-square = 256.2508, Df=6, p=.00000

TABLE 9

Affinity of monitored nation by indeterminacy

	Indeterminacy				
Affinity	0	1	2	3	Total
1	n=105 r%=26.3	44 11.0	205 51.4	45 11.3	399 16.5
2	843 47.8	330 18.7	396 22.5	193 11.0	1762 73.0
3	181 71.8	50 19.8	9 3.6	12 4.8	252 10.4
Total	1129 46.8	424 17.6	610 25.3	250 10.4	2413 100.0

Pearson Chi-square = 248.9507, Df=6, p=.00000

The Agenda-Setting Effects of International News Coverage:

An Examination of Differing News Frames

By

Wayne Wanta,
John Williams
and Yu-Wei Hu

School of Journalism
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL 62901
618-453-3275

**Paper presented to the Mass Communication and Society Division at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication annual conference, Boston, August 1991.

**Wanta is an assistant professor and Williams and Hu are graduate students in the School of Journalism at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

The Agenda-Setting Effects of International News Coverage:
An Examination of Differing News Frames

Abstract

The coverage of 15 categories of international news in four news media was compared with the level of public concern with international problems as recorded by the Gallup organization's most important problem polls. The findings suggest that stories with high levels of conflict that involve the United States have the strongest agenda-setting effect. In addition, two news categories (international trade not involving the U.S., and politics not involving the U.S.) correlated negatively with public concern.

The Agenda-Setting Effects of International News Coverage: An Examination of Differing News Frames

International news stories can deal with an infinite variety of topics, from foreign trade issues to terrorism. It stands to reason that these different types of story presentations -- or news frames -- will have differing effects on members of the public. The agenda-setting influence of international news stories, in other words, may vary due to the type of story receiving coverage.

Since the initial agenda-setting studies (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Shaw and McCombs, 1977), the vast majority of research in this area has found that members of the public learn the relative importance of issues through the amount of coverage these issues receive in the news media. Some categories of coverage, however, should have stronger agenda-setting effects than others. Individuals more than likely will not increase their perceived importance of the issue of international problems if the news media increase their coverage of a national election in France, for instance, but may think international problems is a more important issue if the media increase coverage of a terrorist attack on Americans in Paris.

The location of these stories is the same, but the story frame is not. In other words, the agenda-setting influence of the mass media on the public for the issue of international problems should be contingent to a great degree upon the sub-issue, or news frame, reported. Gitlin (1980) and Tuchman (1978) both point to the fruitfulness of examining story frames, which they define as persistent patterns of presentations through which journalists organize their stories.

Numerous contingent conditions could affect the intensity of media influence. Even the early agenda-setting studies did not suggest uniform influence by the media over time or across issues. Many other variables, such as audience interests and media news values, are "the building blocks of public issues -- which cannot always be predicted (Shaw and Clemmer, 1977, p. 39)."

This study examines one potential contingent condition in the agenda-setting process: the story frame. The study examines 15 categories of international news coverage in a national newspaper (the New York Times) and the three national network newscasts (ABC, CBS and NBC) and the agenda-setting influence this coverage had on public concern with international problems as the most important problem facing our nation.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

The content, structure and flow of international news has been the subject of intense study over the past decades (see, for example, Schramm, 1959; Schramm and Atwood, 1981; and Gerbner and Marvanyi, 1977). However, little research has examined how foreign news reporting influences the opinions held by members of the public. The study of the impact of international news on the opinions and attitudes of

American readers and viewers provides a fertile but untilled field for the application of the concept of agenda-setting.

Much of the research into international news content and flow examines the gatekeeper function of the news media (White, 1950; Peterson, 1979). However, this function appears to offer only limited insight (Rosengren, 1977), and as a result, scholars have looked elsewhere for explanations of what types of international stories receive media coverage.

Lent (1977), for example, contends that national interests, crisis reporting, censorship and the dwindling corps of correspondents constrain international coverage in the U.S. media. A body of research (for example, Zipf, 1946; Maclean and Pinna, 1958; Rosengren, 1972) suggests a correlationship between reader interest and the physical distance between countries.

In their landmark article, Galtung and Ruge (1965) suggest that distance should be conceptualized in terms of cultural distance. Hester (1971) and Zaharopoulos (1990) have refined this relationship as cultural proximity. Others (Rosengren, 1974; Schramm, 1964; Merrill, 1968; Ostgaard, 1965; and Adams, 1964) have suggested that news content and flow are influenced by the political and economic dominance of a relatively small number of countries.

Other research (Hart, 1966; Dajani and Donohue, 1973; Atwood, 1987; Williams, Hu and Wu, 1990) has explored the content of foreign news, particularly in light of the New

World Information Order and the continuing accusations of First World bias in news selection and reporting (see Schiller, 1978; Haque, 1983; Giffard, 1984). These studies, in turn, suggested that distorted or imbalanced foreign news reporting affects the images that individuals may have of other nations (Boulding, 1959; McNelly and Izcáray, 1986).

Enculturation also has received increasing attention recently (Pingree and Hawkins, 1981). For instance, Tan, Tan and Tan (1987) explored how exposure to American television programs has influenced the values of Filipino high school students.

What still appears rare in mass communication research is exploration of the impact of foreign news on a domestic audience, particularly on opinion-formation. The studies on the impact of foreign news have generally focused on development of domestic audience attitudes and images of other nations. McNelly and Izcaray (1986), for example, found news exposure significantly related to positive feelings toward countries and to perceptions of them as successful. However, they repeat the warning that "evidence of content should not be taken as evidence of effect."

The present study argues that, by employing the theoretical tools of agenda-setting, it is possible to assess the effects of international news on domestic opinion.

Though the issue of international problems has received little attention from agenda-setting researchers, international stories should produce strong agenda-setting effects, according to the argument of Zucker (1978). Zucker believes that the news media should have a stronger agenda-setting effect for unobtrusive issues, those in which individuals have little or no personal involvement, than for obtrusive issues. Individuals must rely solely on the news media for information on unobtrusive issues, while individuals can receive additional information on obtrusive issues from their personal involvement with these issues.

International problems should be an unobtrusive issue for the vast majority of individuals in the United States, since logically members of the public should have little direct involvement with international affairs. Coverage of international problems, then, should show a strong agenda-setting influence.

Different types of stories, however, should have different levels of effects on members of the public. As Gitlin (1980) argues, media frames organize the world for both journalists and media consumers. Tuchman (1978) believes news frames impose "order and coherence on the social world."

However, message variables in general, and news frames in particular, have received relatively little attention from agenda-setting researchers.

The significance of how news stories are framed was pointed out by Williams, Shapiro and Cutbirth (1983), who categorized issues covered in the 1980 election on whether or not they were given a "campaign frame." They conclude that voters need a frame or a point of reference for determining the campaign relevance of issues.

Recently, Yagade and Dozier (1990) argued that concrete issues -- those that individuals can identify and picture in their minds, such as energy -- have a stronger agenda-setting influence on the public than do abstract issues because individuals understand the significance of concrete issues as a problem. Individuals have difficulty in understanding the significance of abstract issues, such as the budget deficit, because they cannot picture in their minds billions of dollars of debt.

Categories of international news that are concrete, such as terrorist attacks on Americans, then, should have a stronger agenda-setting effect than categories that are abstract, such as international trade. Individuals would be likely to picture in their minds criminal acts against U.S. citizens, but would be unlikely to picture millions of dollars of grain being traded between countries.

MacKuen and Coombs (1981), meanwhile, found that stories with a high degree of conflict had a stronger influence on the public. International conflict stories or stories dealing with terrorism, then, should demonstrate the strongest agenda-setting effects, according to MacKuen and Coombs. Stories with little conflict, such as a story involving a trade agreement, should produce weaker agenda-setting effects.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question directing this study is: What types of international news frames have the strongest agenda-setting impact on the public?

Previous studies found that stories with high levels of conflict (MacKuen and Coombs, 1981) and stories dealing with concrete issues (Yagade and Dozier, 1990) produce the strongest agenda-setting effects. Therefore, some likely categories in which strong agenda-setting effects should be found are:

* International conflicts involving the United States.
* Terrorism involving U.S. citizens
* Crime/drugs

The above categories all have high degrees of conflict inherent in them. Two of the three categories are also highly concrete because they specifically involve the United States.

Categories in which weaker agenda-setting effects should be found are:

* Conflicts not involving the United States
* Terrorism not involving the United States
* General military/nuclear arms control
* Human rights
* Government corruption

The above categories either have little conflict or do not involve the United States. Therefore, stories in these categories should not have as strong of an agenda-setting impact on individuals than the previous set of categories.

Categories in which few, if any, agenda-setting effects should be found are:

- * Human interest
- * Accidents/disasters/environment
- * U.S.-International trade
- * Trade not involving the United States
- * Political news involving the United States
- * Political news not involving the United States
- * Miscellaneous international stories.

The above categories have even less conflict than the previous sets of categories. Furthermore, some of them do not involve the United States. Therefore, stories in these categories should not have as strong of an agenda-setting effect on individuals than the two previous sets of categories.

METHOD

All 41 Gallup polls from 1975 to 1989 that asked the question "What is the number one problem facing our country today?" were examined to determine the relative concern the public had with international problems. To avoid any potential methodological problems which might occur due to the Vietnam War, the time frame examined begins after the end of the U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia. The percent of respondents naming international problems as the most important problem formed the public concern variable.

Because some Gallup polls periodically differentiated between some sub-categories, all categories related to international problems were added to the totals for the public concern variable. These sub-categories included international tensions, fear of war, and foreign aid. The public concern variable ranged from 4 to 47.

The Gallup poll data, admittedly, are an imperfect device with which to measure public opinion. However, these polls have been used effectively in the past (for example, Funkhouser, 1973; Winter and Eyal, 1981) and they remain a useful measure of public opinion across long periods of time -- as was the case in this study. Smith (1980), in noting the historical depth and significance of the most important problem polls, is surprised at researchers' limited use of these data.

The front pages of the New York Times were then examined to determine the number of stories the newspaper ran dealing with international issues in the four weeks before the Gallup polls. Four weeks was the time frame examined because Winter and Eyal (1981) found that the time-lag for agenda-setting effects to occur is four to six weeks. Zucker (1978) suggests the time-lag is two to four weeks. The New York Times was chosen for the study because, besides having a national circulation, elite media such as the Times may have an agenda-setting effect on smaller media that could show up in survey data of a cross section of the population.

All stories filed from another country or mentioning two or more countries were included in the study. Each story on the front pages that dealt with international news in the four weeks before the polls was coded for the way in which the story was presented. The stories were placed into one of the 15 news categories. Multiple classification was not permitted. If two or more categories appeared in a news item, the story was coded into the dominant classification in order to retain statistical independence of the category system. ABC, CBS and NBC were similarly examined using the Vanderbilt Archives News Abstracts.

The 15 categories in which all stories were placed were:

- U.S.-international conflicts
- Non-U.S. conflicts
- Military/nuclear arms
- Terrorism involving the United States
- Terrorism not involving the United States
- Crime/drugs
- Government corruption
- Human rights
- Accidents/disasters/environment
- U.S.-international trade
- Non-U.S. trade
- Political involving the United States
- Political not involving the United States
- Human interest
- Miscellaneous

Approximately 10 percent of all data was double-coded. Intercoder reliability using Scott's pi was .91.

Pearson correlations were then computed comparing the number of stories in each category for each medium with the percentage of respondents who said international problems was the number one problem facing our country today, as recorded in the Gallup poll data. Statistically significant correlations will suggest which categories of news produced agenda-setting effects on members of the public.

The methodology employed here, then, involved an examination of a single issue across time, which has an important advantage in agenda-setting research. As McCombs (1981) points out, researchers following one issue over time can more sharply focus their analysis of the contingent conditions affecting the strength of agenda-setting effects since measurements of other variables -- such as differences in story frames -- can be more tightly controlled. Studies examining individual issues also have met with wide-spread success (for example, Winter and Eyal, 1981; Winter, Eyal and Rogers 1980).

RESULTS

A total of 25,170 stories were analyzed in this study. Table 1 lists the mean number of stories that the four news media ran in the four weeks before the Gallup polls for each of the categories. Three categories of news dominated all others. Political stories not involving the United States received the most coverage, followed by political stories involving the United States and international conflicts not involving the United States. These three categories accounted for 56.2 percent of all news stories run by the three networks. Government corruption received the least amount of coverage -- less than one percent, or fewer than two stories per news media per four-week time period.

Table 2 summarizes the results of the Pearson correlations for the three networks combined and the *New York Times*. Of the 15 categories of international news coverage, 10 significant correlations were found.

As MacKuen and Coombs (1981) suggest, the categories of news coverage with the highest levels of conflict correlated positively with public concern with international problems. The number of stories dealing with international conflicts involving the United States correlated significantly with public concern with international problems for both the networks ($r = .58$, $p < .001$) and the *New York Times* ($r = .49$, $p < .001$). Coverage of terrorism involving the United States also correlated significantly with public concern for the three networks ($r = .27$, $p < .05$). The frequency of stories dealing with crime/drugs correlated significantly with public concern for the *New York Times* ($r = .28$, $p < .05$).

New York Times coverage of military/nuclear arms ($r = .34$, $p < .05$) and *Times* coverage of conflicts not involving the United States ($r = .35$, $p < .05$) also correlated significantly with public concern with international problems.

A few significant negative correlations were also found. Network stories dealing with trade/economy not involving the United States ($r = -.30$, $p < .05$) and network stories dealing with political news not involving the United States ($r = -.28$, $p < .05$) correlated negatively with public concern. Stories in the New York Times dealing with international politics involving the United States also correlated negatively with public concern ($r = -.27$, $p < .05$).

When all categories were combined, however, only international news coverage in the New York Times ($r = .54$, $p < .001$) correlated significantly with public concern with international problems.

To investigate potential differences between networks, coverage of international news on the three networks were also examined individually, as shown in Table 3. Only three differences from the aggregated data are apparent. First, coverage of crime/drugs correlated significantly with public opinion for both CBS ($r = .29$, $p < .05$) and NBC ($r = .26$, $p < .05$). This replicates the finding for the New York Times in this category. Second, coverage of military/nuclear arms correlated significantly with public opinion for NBC ($r = .31$, p .05), again replicating the finding for the Times. Finally, coverage by NBC of human rights produced a significant correlation with public opinion ($r = .32$, $p < .05$).

DISCUSSION

This study compares the coverage of 15 categories of international news in four news media with the level of public concern with international problems as recorded by the Gallup organization's most important problem polls. A number of specific news frames apparently did have a stronger agenda-setting influence on the public than other categories. In addition, some categories had a negative influence on public concern. This is perhaps the most interesting finding of the study.

This result points to the conclusion that press coverage, besides increasing concern with certain issues, can also decrease concern. Certain categories of news, such as stories dealing with international politics and trade, can give individuals cues that the international arena is functioning quite smoothly. These types of international news stories show individuals that international problems are not really problems at all.

Moreover, the lack of U.S. involvement in two categories that correlated negatively with public concern gave additional cues that international problems were not important. Individuals may have gotten the impression that if international problems were a concern, the U.S. government would have gotten involved.

This finding, then, suggests that certain types of news stories can lower issue salience within individuals. Some stories may reassure individuals that an issue is not important enough to draw their concern -- an idea that has not been previously suggested in agenda-setting research.

In addition, foreign trade and international politics could be classified as "abstract" issues, since individuals should have a difficult time picturing in their heads these two issues. Perhaps individuals cannot comprehend millions of dollars in foreign trade or an election in a foreign country. This finding, then, could support the notion of Yagade and Dozier (1990) that abstract issues will have a lesser agenda-setting influence on the public than will concrete issues that individuals can picture in their minds.

Two other important conclusions are apparent from the results here. First, the findings support the conclusion of MacKuen and Coombs (1981), who argue that stories with high levels of conflict will produce the strongest agenda-setting effects. As Tables 2 and 3 show, coverage dealing with crime and drugs, international conflicts involving the United States and terrorism involving the United States both significantly correlated with public concern on international problems for at least two of the media. The high levels of conflict inherent in these stories gave salience cues to individuals that international problems was an important issue.

Second, the findings also support the conclusion of Yagade and Dozier (1990), who argue that stories involving concrete issues will produce stronger agenda-setting effects than will stories involving abstract issues. General coverage of international conflicts and terrorism did not correlate with public concern, except in the case of the New York Times and international conflicts. The stories needed to involve the United States before they produced agenda-setting effects.

The findings here suggest that individuals need a concrete frame of reference before they become concerned with the international problems issues. They may be able to picture in their minds conflicts and terrorism involving Americans better than these types of stories involving citizens from other countries.

This finding also supports the concept of individuals' "need for orientation" (Weaver, 1977; McCombs and Weaver, 1986). The basis of this concept is that individuals will be more susceptible to agenda-setting effects if (1) they have high uncertainty about the issue, and (2) the issue is highly relevant to them. If news stories of international conflicts and terrorism do not involve the United States, the coverage may be perceived as less relevant to individuals. Thus, these irrelevant international stories not involving the United States have less of an agenda-setting impact than relevant international stories involving the United States.

Overall, then, the findings point to the fruitfulness of examining story frames as a variable in the agenda-setting process. Some types of international story frames apparently have a stronger agenda-setting impact on members of the public than other frames. In fact, of the four news media examined here, only the New York Times produced an agenda-setting effect through its coverage of all categories of international news. Apparently, then, the story frame contained in news stories plays an important role in the agenda-setting impact of international news coverage.

Since international news frames vary in their agenda-setting intensity, it is logical to assume that different news frames for other issues also will have varying agenda-setting impact. Unravelling what types of frames provide the strongest salience cues to the public on other issues would have important implications in public opinion research.

In addition, the findings also suggest the need to examine other types of coverage that might reassure the public and thus lower the salience of certain issues. While the basic agenda-setting hypothesis has been generally supported by a wide variety of studies, the notion that some stories can give individuals cues that issues are unimportant has never been suggested by agenda-setting researchers. Thus, future research in this area is needed.

Table 1. Mean number of stories run by four news media in the four weeks before the Gallup organization's most important problem polls, 1975-1989.

Category	ABC	CBS	NBC	NYT
U.S.-International conflicts	6.12	6.78	7.12	8.17
Non-U.S. conflicts	18.98	20.05	19.42	19.29
Military/nuclear arms	7.61	6.24	7.00	15.32
Terrorism involving U.S.	11.81	9.95	10.49	3.68
Terrorism not involving U.S.	10.90	10.29	10.73	2.83
Crime/drugs	3.27	3.63	3.76	2.22
Gov't corruption	1.81	1.32	1.56	1.22
Human rights	3.32	2.93	2.88	5.56
Accidents/disasters	9.02	9.88	9.07	2.06
U.S.-International trade/economy	1.68	2.37	2.46	3.05
Non-U.S. trade	2.71	3.17	3.12	4.32
Political involving U.S.	34.66	33.24	36.49	10.10
Political not involving U.S.	42.44	47.17	44.59	18.46
Human interest	3.10	3.05	3.95	5.98
Miscellaneous	7.54	8.95	9.49	4.76
All categories	164.95	169.02	172.12	107.81

Table 2. Pearson correlations of public concern with international problems as the country's most important problem and coverage of international news by the three national networks and the New York Times, 1975-1989.

Category	Networks	NYT
U.S.-International conflicts	.58***	.49***
Non-U.S. conflicts	-.05	.35*
Military/nuclear arms	.24	.34*
Terrorism involving U.S.	.27*	.04
Terrorism not involving U.S.	-.18	.04
Crime/drugs	.25	.28*
Gov't corruption	-.10	-.13
Human rights	.18	.21
Accidents/disasters	-.04	.18
U.S.-International trade/economy	.05	-.05
Non-U.S. trade	-.30*	-.07
Political involving U.S.	-.15	-.27*
Political not involving U.S.	-.28*	-.25
Human interest	.05	.00
Miscellaneous	.04	-.21
All categories	.15	.54***

Table 3. Pearson correlations of public concern with international problems as the country's most important problem and coverage of international news by the three national networks, 1975-1989.

Category	ABC	CBS	NBC
U.S.-International conflicts	.54***	.59***	.61***
Non-U.S. conflicts	-.09	-.05	-.01
Military/nuclear arms	.19	.17	.31*
Terrorism involving U.S.	.29*	.21	.31*
Terrorism not involving U.S.	-.22	-.18	-.12
Crime/drugs	.11	.29*	.26*
Gov't corruption	-.11	-.17	-.03
Human rights	.15	.02	.32*
Accidents/disasters	-.06	-.10	.02
U.S.-International trade/economy	-.06	.17	.02
Non-U.S. trade	-.33*	-.39**	-.14
Political involving U.S.	-.09	-.19	-.15
Political not involving U.S.	-.33*	-.31*	-.18
Human interest	-.02	.12	-.02
Miscellaneous	-.02	.01	.05
All categories	.07	.01	.23

REFERENCES

J.B. Adams (1964), "A Qualitative Analysis of Domestic and Foreign News on the AP TA Wire," *Gazette*, 10:285-295.

L. Erwin Atwood (1987), "News of U.S. and Japan in Each Other's Papers," *Gazette*, 39:73-89.

Kenneth E. Boulding (1959), "National Images and International Systems," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 3:119-131.

Nabil Dajani and John Donohue (1973), "Foreign News in the Arab Press: A Content Analysis of Six Arab Dailies," *Gazette*, 19:155-170.

G. Ray Funkhouser (1973), "The Issues of the Sixties: An Exploratory Study in the Dynamics of Public Opinion," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37:62-75.

Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge (1965), "The Structure of Foreign News," *Journal of Peace Research*, 2:64-91.

Herbert J. Gans (1980), *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time*, New York: Vintage Books.

George Gerbner and George Marvanyi (1977), "The Many Worlds of the World's Press," *Journal of Communication*, 27:52-65.

C. Anthony Giffard (1984), "Developed and Developing Nation News in U.S. Wire Service Files to Asia," *Journalism Quarterly*, 61:14-19.

Todd Gitlin (1980), *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

S.M. Mazharul Haque (1983), "Is U.S. Coverage of News in Third World Imbalanced?" *Journalism Quarterly*, 60:521-524.

John A. Hart (1966), "Foreign News in U.S. and English Daily Newspapers: A Comparison," *Journalism Quarterly*, 43:443-448.

Al Hester (1971), "An Analysis of News Flow from Developed and Developing Nations," *Gazette*, 17:29-43.

John A. Lent (1977), "Foreign News in American Media," *Journal of Communication*, 27:46-51.

Malcolm S. Maclean Jr. and Luca Pinna (1958), "Distance and News Interest: Scarperia, Italy," *Journalism Quarterly*, 35:36-48.

Michael B. MacKuen and Steven L. Coombs (1981), *More Than News: Media Power in Public Affairs*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Maxwell E. McCombs (1981), "The Agenda-Setting Approach," in D.D. Nimmo & K.R. Sanders (eds.), *Handbook of Political Communication*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, pp. 121-140.

Maxwell E. McCombs and David H. Weaver (1986), "Toward a Merger of Gratifications and Agenda-Setting Research," in Rosengren (ed.), *Media Gratifications Research*, pp. 95-108.

Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw (1972), "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36:176-187.

John T. McNelly and Fausto Izcaray (1986), "International News Exposure and Images of Nations," *Journalism Quarterly*, 63:546-553.

John C. Merrill (1968), *The Elite Press: Great Newspapers of the World*, New York: Pitman Publishing Co.

Einar Ostgaard (1965), "Factors Influencing the Flow of News," *Journal of Peace Research*, 2:39-63.

Suzanne Pingree and Robert Hawkins (1981), "U.S. Programs on Australian Television: the Cultivation Effect," *Journal of Communication*, 31:97-105.

Sophia Peterson (1979), "Foreign News Gatekeepers and Criteria of Newsworthiness," *Journalism Quarterly*, 56:116-125.

Karl Erik Rosengren (1972), "International News: Time and Type of Report," in J.C. Merril and D.H. Fischer (eds.), *International Communication*, New York: Hastings House.

Karl Erik Rosengren (1974), "International News: Methods, Data and Theory," *Journal of Peace Research*, 11:145-156.

Karl Erik Rosengren (1977), "International News: Four Types of Tables," *Journal of Communication*, 27:67-75.

Herbert I. Schiller (1978), "Decolonization of Information: Efforts Toward a New Information Order," *Latin American Perspectives*, 1:35-48.

Wilber Schramm (1959), *One Day in the World's Press*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Wilber Schramm (1964), *Mass Media and National Development*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 58-90.

Wilber Schramm and L. Erwin Atwood (1981), *Circulation of News in the Third World: A Study of Asia*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press.

Donald L. Shaw and C.L. Clemmer (1977), "News and the Public Response," in D.L. Shaw and M.E. McCombs (eds.), *The Emergence of American Political Issues: The Agenda-Setting Function of the Press*, St. Paul: West Publishing Co., pp. 33-51.

Donald L. Shaw and Maxwell E. McCombs (1977), *The Emergence of American Political Issues: The Agenda-Setting Function of the Press*, St. Paul: West Publishing Co.

Tom W. Smith (1980), "America's Most Important Problem -- A Trend Analysis, 1946-1976," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 44:164-180.

Alexis S. Tan, Gerdean K. Tan and Alma S. Tan (1987), "American TV in the Philippines: A Test of Cultural Impact," *Journalism Quarterly*, 64:65-72, 144.

Gaye Tuchman (1978), *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*, New York" The Free Press.

David H. Weaver (1977), "Political Issues and Voter Need for Orientation," in D.L. Shaw and M.E. McCombs (eds.), *The Emergence of American Political Issues: The Agenda-Setting Function of the Press*, St. Paul: West Publishing Co., pp. 107-119.

David Manning White (1950), "The 'Gate Keeper': A Case Study in the Selection of News," *Journalism Quarterly*, 27:383-390.

John W. Williams, Yu-Wei Hu and Yi-Chen Wu (1990), "The News About Taiwan in the World Press," paper presented at the annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Minneapolis.

Wenmouth Williams Jr., Mitchell Shapiro and Craig Cutbirth (1983), "The Impact of Campaign Agendas on Perceptions of Issues in 1980 Campaign, *Journalism Quarterly*, 60:226-231.

James P. Winter and Chaim Eyal (1981), "Agenda-Setting for the Civil Rights Issue," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 45:376-383.

James P. Winter, Chaim Eyal and Ann Rogers (1980), "Issue Specific Agenda-Setting: Inflation, Employment and National Unity in Canada, 1977-1978," paper presented to the International Communication Association annual convention, Acapulco, Mexico.

Aileen Yagade and David M. Dozier (1990), "The Media Agenda-Setting Effect of Concrete Versus Abstract Issues," *Journalism Quarterly*, 67:3-10.

Thimios Zaharopoulos (1990), "Cultural Proximity in International News Coverage: 1988 U.S. Presidential Election in the Greek Press," *Journalism Quarterly*, 67:190-194.

George Zipf (1946), "Some Determinants of Circulation of Information," *American Journal of Psychology*, pp 401-421.

Harold G. Zucker (1978), "The Variable Nature of News Media Influence," in B.D. Ruben (ed.) *Communication Yearbook No. 2*, New Brunswick: Transaction, pp. 225-245.

WESTERN AND THIRD WORLD READERS' INTEREST IN NEGATIVE NEWS

by

Anju Grover Chaudhary
School of Communications
Howard University

Washington, D.C.

Accepted by the International Communication Division,
74th Annual Convention of the Association for
Education in Journalism and Mass Communication,
Boston, August 7-10, 1991.

ABSTRACT

WESTERN AND THIRD WORLD READERS' INTEREST IN NEGATIVE NEWS

by

Anju Grover Chaudhary
School of Communications
Howard University
Washington, D.C.

Since media gatekeepers anywhere need to be aware of their audiences' interests, this study examines whether readers are more interested in negative than positive news regardless of where they are and whether males and females are different in terms of their interest in news.

Findings suggest that both Western and Third World readers are more interested in negative than positive news and that sex is not a determining factor in how interesting a person finds a newspaper.

WESTERN AND THIRD WORLD READERS' INTEREST IN NEGATIVE NEWS

In the competitive and profit-oriented Western media markets, journalists tend to give the public what it wants instantaneously in order to achieve the largest audience possible. In a buyer's market, it is believed, the wishes of the people are valued because they shop around for the news they want. If readers are interested in news about disasters, coups, earthquakes, crime, murders, life-threatening mishaps to individuals and groups, then the Western media will provide this kind of information to the readers. According to some readership studies of the Western media, readers and viewers are interested in bad news more than in any other kind of news.[1] Yet, on the other hand, there is substantial evidence that media consumers have been lately denouncing the use of bad news. American readers are complaining that newspapers and tv newscasts are highly negative, too pessimistic, too depressing, less satisfying and less desirable.[2]

---

[1] See, for example, Charles Swanson, "What They Read in 130 Daily Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly 32 (1955), pp. 411-421; Jack B. Haskins, "Stories of Violence Get High Readership," Editor and Publisher (October 19, 1968), p. 38; Robert W. Clyde, "News Readership as a Function of Several Affective Characteristics," Journalism Quarterly 45 (1968), pp. 7-13; David H. Weaver and J. B. Mauro, "Newspaper Readership Patterns," Journalism Quarterly 55 (1978), pp. 84-91; N. H. Anderson and A. Jacobson, "Effect of Stimulus Inconsistency and Discounting Instructions in Personality Impression Formation," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 2 (1965), pp. 531-539; Leo Bogart, "How Do People Read Newspapers?" Media/Scope (1962), pp. 51-58.

[2] See Clark, Martin & Bartolomeo, Inc., Relating to Readers in the '80s (American Society of Newspaper Editors, May 1984), p. 28; Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc., "Tracking the Attitudes of the Public Toward the Newspaper Business," ANPA News Research

In most Third World countries, on the other hand, the news media give to the people what the people "need" rather than what they "want."[3] Third World leaders and scholars contend that the primary function of journalists should be the promotion of national development objectives[4] since the purpose of news in a majority of Third World countries is to educate the public and help in nation

---

Report No. 19 (April 20, 1979); Jack B. Haskins and M. Mark Miller, "The Effects of Bad News and Good News on a Newspaper's Image," Journalism Quarterly 61 (Spring 1984), pp. 3-13; Mary Lou Galcian, "Too Much Bad News and Not Enough Good News: Television Audience Perception." Paper presented to the Southwest Education Council for Journalism/Mass Communications, Las Cruces, New Mexico, October 5, 1985, cited in Gerald C. Stone, Barbara Hartung and Dwight Jensen, "Local TV News and the Good-Bad Dyad," Journalism Quarterly 64 (Spring 1987), pp. 37-44; Mary-Lou Galcian and Steve Pasternack, "Television News Directors' Attitudes Toward `Good News' and `Bad News': A National Survey," Paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Norman, Okla., August 1986, quoted in Mary-Lou Galcian and Norris D. Vestre, "Effects of `Good News' and `Bad News' on Newscast Image and Community Image," Journalism Quarterly 64 (Summer-Autumn 1987); Leo Bogart, Press and Public: Who Reads What, When, Where, and Why in American Newspapers (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc., 1981); Jack B. Haskins, "The Trouble With Bad News," Newspaper Research Journal 3 (1981), pp. 3-16; Jonathan Alter, "The Media in the Dock," Newsweek (October 22, 1984), pp. 66-67, 70, 72.

[3] Munir K. Nasser, "News Values Versus Ideology: A Third World Perspective," in L. John Martin and Anju Grover Chaudhary (eds.), Comparative Mass Media Systems (New York: Longman, Inc., 1983), p. 58.

[4] See F. Braid and J. Valera, The Philippines At A Crossroad, (Manila: Center for Research and Communication, 1985); D. S. Mehta, Mass Communication and Journalism in India (Bombay: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1979), p. 71; Narinder Aggarwala, "The Issues at Stake and a New Information Model," Media Development 28 (1981), p. 8; Narinder Aggarwala, "A New Journalism," Intermedia 8 (1980), p. 26; Mukerjee, Illustrated Weekly of India (October 10, 1976); Chanchal Sarkar, What Ails the Indian Press (New Delhi: Somavia Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1970); Chanchal Sarkar, Challenge and Stagnation: The Indian Mass Media. (New Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1969).

building. The emphasis is therefore on positiveness rather than negativeness. The interests and wishes of the readers thus take a back seat in the gatekeepers' criteria of news selection. Moreover, since the Third World media have comparatively less competition and are often government-subsidized, they have a lower need to draw an audience and cater to their interests. However, a few Third World journalists also claim that they give importance to "reader interest" in selecting news.[5] According to Indian journalist Pran Chopra, public interest is as important in Asia as anywhere else.[6] According to some scholars, media in Asia also overplay bad news.[7] Hence, there is some indication that journalists in Third World countries also provide more negative than positive news to their readers although there is very little evidence that readers are indeed more interested in negative news than in any other kind of news.

Moreover, even though journalists claim that they attempt to predict what their readers and viewers are interested in, research seems to indicate that journalists often do not know their audience very well.[8] A journalist's perception of what readers want to read is basic to what a newspaper is going to carry, especially in the Western World and those countries of the Third World which claim to adhere to the democratic philosophy. Hence, a study investigating the interests of audiences is crucial for media gatekeepers since they need to be aware of their audiences' interests.

---

[5] Mehta, op.cit.; and Wolseley, op.cit.

[6] Pran Chopra, "Asian News Values" Paper delivered at the UNESCO Colombo Conference on the Development of News Agencies in Asia," Quoted in Wilbur Schramm and Erwin Atwood, Circulation of News in the Third World: A Study of Asia (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1981), p. 166.

[7] See, for example, Narinder Aggarwala, "Media, News and People A Third World View," Media Asia 5 (1978), pp. 78-81; Chopra, op.cit.; and Robert L. Stevenson and Richard R. Cole, "Patterns of Foreign News," in Robert L. Stevenson and Donald Lewis Shaw (eds.), Foreign News and the New World Information Order (Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1984), pp. 88-97.

Literature Review

"Reader interest" is an important criterion of news selection according to most Western journalists.[9] Several scholars have found that readers are especially interested in bad news. Wilbur Schramm, who proposed two basic motivations for information seeking -- an "immediate reward" motivation to acquire information which provides immediate gratification, and a "delayed reward" motivation for information which provides gratification when it is used later -- stated that "most of the news in the immediate reward group is important to a human being because of the individual satisfaction and drive-reduction it accomplishes."[10] He defined the "immediate reward" category of news as that which deals with crime and corruption, accidents and disasters, sports and recreation, social events, and human interest. Another scholar, Guido H. Stempel, who factor-analyzed the categories of reader interest in his study, found that "immediate reward" and "conflict-suspense" were two of the eight factors.[11] In other words, two of the categories that the readers were interested in, dealt with negative news. This offers some hints about the nature of reader interest.

---

[8] See, for example, Herbert J. Gans, Deciding What's News (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), pp. 230-231; T. Tim Wulfemeyer, "Perceptions of Viewer Interests By Local TV Journalists," Journalism Quarterly 61 (Summer 1984), pp. 432-435; Pamela K. Doyle, "A Descriptive Study of Bad-Good News Content in Television Newscasts," Unpublished M.S. Thesis, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1982; and Herbert J. Gans, "News Media, News Policy, and Democracy: Research for the Future." Journal of Communication (Summer 1983), pp. 174-184.

[9] Several textbooks list "reader interest" as one of the criterion of news selection. See, for example, Ken Metzler, Newsgathering (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979), pp. 46-50; Bruce Porter and Timothy Ferris, The Practice of Journalism: A Guide to Reporting and Writing the News (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1988), p. 4; Julian B. Harris, Kelly Leiter and Stanley Johnson, The Complete Reporter (New York: Macmillan, 1985), p. 29; Brian S. Brooks, George Kennedy, Daryl R. Moen and Don Ranly, News Reporting and Writing (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), p. 5; and George A. Hough 3rd, News Writing (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1988), pp. 12-14.

Other studies also provide substantial evidence that readers and viewers are interested in bad news more than in any other kind of news. Swanson's readership study of 130 newspapers covering the period from 1939 to 1950 showed a readership of 25% for bad news, compared to 20% for all other kinds of news.[12] He found that news items on war, fire, disaster, human interest, and major crime were among the ten most read categories.[13] Haskins found a readership interest rating of 52 for violent news items, compared with 37 for nonviolent news items;[14] Clyde found significantly more readership of "unpleasant" than "pleasant" items among readers in a survey of a single issue of Minneapolis Star. The study, however, did not go into subject categories.[15] Clarke found a readership interest rate of 64 for violent articles, compared with 49 for all other articles;[16] Weaver and Mauro found 36% readership for bad news items, compared with 19% for all other editorial items.[17] Anderson and Jacobson found that people seem to prefer negative information over positive if a situation involves personal consequences.[18] Bogart, who compared the kinds of news stories the public remembers with the distribution of newspaper content, found that crime, accidents, etc. accounted for a large proportion of comments. He argued that "It would appear that what people perceive as memorable news reflects their idiosyncracy, personal interests and needs."[19] Dulcie Straughan's study[20] reported a higher interest in stories that contained the news values of conflict and proximity. These findings suggest the need for further study to determine whether readers are indeed more interested in negative news and news of the West regardless of where they are.

---

[10] Wilbur Schramm, "The Nature of News," Journalism Quarterly 27 (1949), pp. 260, 262.

[11] Guido H. Stempel III, "A Factor Analytic Study of Reader Interest in News," Journalism Quarterly 44 (Summer 1967), pp. 326-330.

[12] Swanson, op.cit.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 416.

---

[14] Haskins, "Stories of Violence Get High Readership," op.cit., p. 38.

[15] Clyde, op.cit.

[16] Clarke, op.cit.

[17] Weaver and Mauro, op.cit.

[18] Anderson and Jacobson, op.cit.

[19] Bogart, op.cit.

[20] Straughan, op.cit.

Studies have found that the audience look to the mass media for providing them with negative information. Ervin found that "The population looks to the mass media for information abut those areas of social life that the citizen seldom, if ever, comes in direct contact with. One of the most consistent areas of 'news hunger' has been in the area of crime and enforcement laws."[21] Sood, in examining the news media operations in natural disasters, found that the mass media organizations covering natural disasters attract the audience.[22]

On the other hand, there is evidence that Western media consumers have also been lately denouncing the use of bad news. American readers and viewers are complaining that newspapers and tv newscasts are highly negative, pessimistic, depressing, less satisfying and less desirable.[23] According to recent polls, a majority of Americans believe newspapers and television focus too much on bad news and not enough on good news. A nationwide newspaper survey in 1979 found that 7 out of 10 Americans interviewed believed that there is "too much emphasis on bad news and not enough on the good."[24] A 1984 survey found that the television news has an undesirable effect on the viewers and that it makes them feel depressed.[25]

---

[21] Robert Ferrell Ervin, "A Co-Orientational Analysis of the Relationship Between Law Enforcement Officers and Newspaper Reporters on Crime News," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1981.

[22] Rahul Swaroop Sood, "News Media Operations in Natural Disasters," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1982.

[23] See Clark, Martin & Bartolomeo, Inc., *op. cit.*, p. 28; Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc., *op. cit.*; Haskins and Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-13; Galcian, *op. cit.*; Galcian and Pasternack, *op. cit.*; Bogart, *op.cit.*; Haskins, "The Trouble With Bad News,"*op.cit.*; Alter, *op. cit.*

The 1987 Times Mirror poll, the latest in a series of surveys on press coverage, found that "readers and viewers feel that journalists have gone 'too far' in their coverage of personal matters....[26] Most of these so-called "personal matters" presumably are bad news for the persons involved. These conflicting results in the studies underscore the necessity for conducting some more studies to determine whether indeed readers are interested in negative news.

Media in Third World also overplay bad news, according to Pran Chopra, a well-known Indian journalist. "There is a tendency of many journalists," states Chopra, "to dramatize or sensationalize things, to dwell on disasters or failures rather than on the positive story, to waste time or space on what is temporarily titillating at the expense of what may be of more long-term significance in the affairs of men and nations."[27] He attributes this to the news criteria of Asian journalists who have been influenced by Western journalism:

---

[24] Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc., op.cit.

[25] Galcian & Pasternack, op.cit.

[26] The Washington Post (Nov. 19, 1987), p. A10.

[27] Chopra, op.cit., p. 33.

> The criteria employed by Asian journalists in deciding what to report or print have largely arisen from this background of Asian influences, whether cultural, socio-political, geographical or demographic,, and from their interplay with diverse Western influences, especially the influence of Western liberal democratic journalism....[28]

Stevenson and Cole's study also revealed that negative news is not only predominant in Western media, but in the Third World media as well.[29] Ume-Nwagbo also drew a similar conclusion in his 1982 study of African newspapers.[30]

Several scholars have pointed out that the mass media in Asia, Africa, and Latin America have almost invariably derived from media in developed countries and that journalists in these countries have adopted Western news values.[31] Jeremy Tunstall, one of the strongest proponents of this theory, states that "journalists in much of the world have to a greater or lesser extent adopted American news values, styles of newswriting and presentations, and definitions of the role of the journalist."[32] Communication scholars Elihu Katz and George Wedell, in their book on Broadcasting in the Third World, write: "The same mix of news and entertainment can be seen and heard in the most diverse cultural, ideological, and economic settings."[33]

---

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[29] Robert L. Stevenson and Richard R. Cole, "Patterns of Foreign News" in Robert L. Stevenson and Donald Lewis Shaw (eds.), *Foreign News and the New World Information Order* (Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1984), pp. 88-97.

[30] Ebele N. Ume-Nwagbo, "Foreign News Flow in Africa: A Content Analytical Study on a Regional Basis," *Gazette* 29 (1982), pp. 41-56.

[31] See Peter Golding, "The Transfer of Professional Ideologies to Media in Developing Countries," *Educational Broadcasting International* (1977), pp. 103-105; Rosalynde Ainslie, *The Press in Africa: Communications Past and Present* (New York: Praeger, 1978), pp. 187-196; Elihu Katz and George Wedell, *Broadcasting in the Third World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977);and Jeremy Tunstall, "The American Role in Worldwide Mass Communication," in George Gerbner (ed.), *Mass Media Policies in Changing Cultures* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1977), pp. 3-12.

The many complaints about the abundance of "bad news" in the media have led many critics to claim that journalists actually prefer the bad news stories over the good. Several communication scholars, who have examined the news selection patterns of journalists, have found evidence that journalists rate negative events as more important and more newsworthy than positive events and that they give preferential display to negative events.[34] Some studies have even shown that given a choice between a positive and a negative story, journalists will select the negative story over the positive for publication or broadcast.[35]

---

[32] Tunstall, op.cit., p.6.

[33] Katz and Wedell, op. cit., p. 166.

[34] See Robert W. Clyde and James K. Buckalew, "Inter-media Standardization: A Q-Analysis of News Editors," Journalism Quarterly 46 (1969), pp. 349-351; Sophia Peterson, "Foreign News Gatekeepers and Criteria of Newsworthiness," Journalism Quarterly 56 (1979), pp. 116-125; Robert Bohle, "Negativism As a News Selection Predictor," Paper Presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Knoxville, March 1986; Jack B. Haskins and M. Mark Miller, Effects of Bad News and Good News on a Newspaper's Image," Journalism Quarterly 61 (Spring 1984), pp. 3-13.

Even though journalists claim that they know what their readers and viewers are interested in, researchers have indicated that this area remains virtually unstudied.[36] Herbert Gans, for example, recommended more than seven years ago that one topic that deserves early attention is "a testing of the assumptions that journalists routinely make about audience interest....[37] Yet, no comprehensive research seems to have been done in this area.

Another area worth examining is whether male audience are different from female audience in their interest in news. Only a few readership studies have examined, among other things, preferences of male/female interests in news. One study found that men and women generally preferred the same groupings of subject-matter content within newspapers,[38] while another study found that males were more interested than females in news of war, politics, government and sports.[39] Yet another study of Third World readers found that males were more interested than females in foreign,

---

[35] See Johan Galtung & Mari H. Ruge, "Structuring and Selecting News," in Stanley Cohen and Jack Young (eds.), *The Manufacture of News: A Reader* (California: Sage Publications, 1973); Miller, *op.cit.*; Sophia Peterson, "International News Selection by the Elite Press: A Case Study," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 45 (1981), pp. 143-163; and Dennis J. Lowry, "Gresham's Law and the Network TV News Selection," *Journal of Broadcasting* 15 (1971), pp. 167-170.

[36] See, for example, Gans, *Deciding What's News, op.cit.*; Wulfemeyer, *op.cit.*; Haskins, *op.cit.*; and Doyle, *op.cit.*

[37] Gans, "News Media, News Policy, and Democracy," *op.cit.*

[38] Weaver and Mauro, *op.cit.*

[39] Swanson, *op.cit.*

Third World and development news.[40] No such comparative studies of Western and Third World male/female readers have been done.

These findings suggest the need for further study to determine whether readers are indeed more interested in negative news than positive news and news of the West regardless of where they are and whether male readers are different from female readers in terms of their interest in news. No comprehensive, systematic and comparative research has been done in this area.

Specifically, the purpose of this study is to examine the following research questions:

RQ1: Are newspaper readers interested in negative news?

RQ2: Are Western newspaper readers more interested in negative news about the Third World than negative news about the West itself?

RQ3: Are Third World newspaper readers more interested in negative news about the Western World than negative news about the Third World itself?

RQ4: Are male readers different from female readers in terms of their interest in news?

RQ5: Are Western male/female readers different from Third World male/female readers in terms of their interest in news?

Method

To determine whether Western and Third World readers are interested in negative news or positive news, a total of 40 readers -- ten nationals (5 males and 5 females) each from United States, Great Britain, India and Nigeria -- were selected for the experiment on the basis of their availability.[41]

---

[40] Schramm, "Circulation of News in Asia," op.cit.

A total of 30 headlines were selected from newspapers of the four countries to determine how much Western World and Third World readers were interested in each of the following types of news: negative news in general; positive news in general; negative news about Third World countries; positive news about Third World countries; negative news about Western countries; and positive news about Western countries.

A set of 5 headlines from each of the above types of news (with a total of 30) was selected for the experiment. Readers were asked to indicate on a three-point scale -- ranging from very likely to not at all likely -- how likely they were to read a report on each of these topics.

Cross-tabulations were prepared for each set of headline preferences on each type of news by Western readers and Third World readers to determine whether the two types of readers differed in their preferences of variables. In addition, cross-tabulations were prepared for all variables by each group of readers separately, i.e., American readers, British readers, Indian readers and Nigerian readers to enable the researcher to examine whether readers from different countries differed in their likelihood of reading different types of news. Moreover, cross-tabulations were prepared for all variables by male readers and female readers separately. This enabled the researcher to examine whether male readers differed from female readers in terms of their likelihood of reading different types of news.

---

[41] Nationals from Great Britain, India and the United States were interviewed in their respective countries. Nigerian nationals, however, were interviewed in the United States. But only those nationals from Nigeria were selected who had been in the United States for less than two years because it was assumed that they would have been influenced by and, therefore, prejudiced in favor of the way the news is presented in the United States if their stay in the country had been longer.

Chi-squares were calculated from the numbers obtained in the cross-tabulations for all variables to determine if there was any significant difference in the frequencies obtained on Western readers vs. Third World readers in these variables. An alpha level of .05 was selected as a level of significance. Secondly, percentages were examined to determine whether the proportion of interest[42] indicated in each type by Western readers (separately and combined) was more than or less than the proportion of interest indicated in each type of news by Third World readers (separately and combined).

Findings

In response to the first research question whether newspaper readers are interested in negative news, it was found that 35 percent of readers were "very likely" to read negative news, 57.5 percent were "somewhat likely" to read negative news and only 7.5

---

[42] Interest in each type of news was determined by the extent of readers' likelihood of reading a particular news item of a particular type. For example, if a reader's response indicated "very likely," it was determined as having a strong interest in that type of news. If, on the other hand, a reader's response indicated "not at all likely" to read a particular news item, it was determined as being of less interest to the readers.

percent readers were "not at all likely" to read negative news (See Table 1). An examination of the readers' ratings of positive headlines revealed that they were somewhat less interested in positive news (25% were "very likely"; 50% were "somewhat likely"; and 25% were "not at all likely" to read positive news) than negative news.

No significant difference was found between the ratings of Western readers and Third World readers on negative news. (X^2 =.37861, 2 d.f., n.s. See Table 1). Western readers were as likely to read negative news (35% "very likely"; 55% "somewhat likely") as Third World readers (35% "very likely"; and 60% "somewhat likely").

In response to the second research question, no significant difference was found in Western newspaper readers' ratings of negative news of the Third World and negative news of the West._(X^2 = 3.607, 2 d.f., n.s., See Table 2). Also, with regard to the third research question, no significant difference was found in the Third World newspaper readers' ratings of negative news about the Western World and in the Third World (X^2 = 0.676, 2 d.f., n.s. See Table 3).

With regard to the question of whether male readers are different from female readers in terms of their interest in news, no significant difference was found. (X^2 = 0.21, 3 d.f., n.s., See Table 4). The responses of 20 male and 20 female readers to the question, "How interesting do you find the newspapers you read" did not show any significant difference.

Also, it was found that Western male readers are not different from Third World male readers in terms of their interest in news. The responses of 10 Western male readers and 10 Third World male readers on how interesting they find the newspapers they read, showed no significant differences. (X^2 = 1.476, 3 d.f., n.s. See Table 5). Also, no significant differences were found between Western female readers and Third World female readers in terms of their interest in news (X^2 = 3.618, 3 d.f., n.s., See Table 6).

Discussion

Since one major charge of media critics is that Western media and Third World media place too much emphasis on negative news, whether it is about their own countries or about other countries, this study examined whether Western and Third World readers differ in their interest in negative news and whether they prefer positive news.

The findings of this study suggest that Western readers are no more interested in negative news than are Third World readers. Both Western and Third World readers indicated that they would be more likely to read negative news than positive news. The findings thus corroborate the Western and Third World readership studies that people are more interested in negative news than in any other kind of news.

With regard to the question of whether Western World readers are more interested in negative news about the Third World than negative news about the West itself, no significant difference was found. Therefore, the defense generally used by Western gatekeepers that readers are interested in negative news from the Third World does not hold true.

A sub-purpose of this study was to examine whether male readers are different from female readers in terms of their interest in news *and* whether Western male/female readers are different from Third World male/female readers in terms of their interest in news. The findings do not suggest any differences between male and female readers in terms of their interest in news. Also, no differences were found between Western readers and Third World readers in terms of their interest in news. One may conclude, therefore, that the sex of a reader is not a determining factor in how interesting a person -- whether from the Western World or from the Third World -- would generally find the newspapers to be.

Implications

The present research has important implications for media gatekeepers. The journalists' perception of what readers want to read is basic to what a newspaper is going to carry, especially in the Western World and those countries of the Third World which claim to adhere to the democratic philosophy. This study's findings are crucial for media gatekeepers since they need to be aware of their audiences' interests.

TABLE 1

THIRD WORLD READERS AND WESTERN READERS IN TERMS OF HOW LIKELY THEY ARE TO READ NEGATIVE NEWS

Negt COUNT EXP VAL ROW PCT COL PCT TOT PCT	VERY LIKELY	SOMEWHAT LIKELY	NOT AT ALL LIKELY	ROW TOTAL
THIRD WORLD READERS	7 7.0 35.0% 50.0% 17.5% 0.0	12 11.5 60.0% 52.2% 30.0% .5	1 1.5 5.0% 33.3% 2.5% -.5	20 50.0%
WESTERN READERS	7 7.0 35.0% 50.0% 17.5% 0.0	11 11.5 55.0% 47.8% 27.5% -.5	2 1.5 10.0% 66.7% 5.0% .5	20 50.0%
COLUMN TOTAL	14 35.0%	23 57.5%	3 7.5%	40 100.0%

CHI-SQUARE	D.F.	SIGNIFICANCE
.37681	2	N.S.

TABLE 2

WESTERN READERS IN TERMS OF HOW LIKELY THEY ARE TO READ NEGATIVE NEWS ABOUT THE WEST AND NEGATIVE NEWS ABOUT THE THIRD WORLD

```
                *Negt
        COUNT   *
        EXP VAL *
        ROW PCT *VERY LIKELY     SOMEWHAT        NOT AT ALL LIKELY     ROW
        COL PCT *                LIKELY                                TOTAL
        TOT PCT *
        ********************************************************************
                *      1       *      5        *        3         *      9
   VERY LIKELY  *    0.45      *     3.6       *      4.95        *   45.0%
                *    11.1%     *    55.6%      *      33.3%       *
                *   100.0%     *    62.5%      *      27.3%       *
                *     5.0%     *    25.0%      *      15.0%       *
                ****************************************************
                *      0       *      3        *        8         *     11
   SOMEWHAT     *    0.55      *     4.4       *      6.05        *   55.0%
     LIKELY     *    0.0%      *    27.3%      *      72.7%       *
                *    0.0%      *    37.5%      *      72.7%       *
                *    0.0%      *    15.0%      *      20.0%       *
                ****************************************************
        COLUMN         1              8               11                20
        TOTAL        5.0%          40.0%            55.0%            100.0%

   CHI-SQUARE                     D.F.          SIGNIFICANCE

     3.607                          2               N.S.
```

TABLE 3

THIRD WORLD READERS IN TERMS OF HOW LIKELY THEY ARE TO READ NEGATIVE NEWS ABOUT THE WEST AND NEGATIVE NEWS ABOUT THIRD WORLD

COUNT EXP VAL ROW PCT COL PCT TOT PCT	Negt VERY LIKELY	SOMEWHAT LIKELY	NOT AT ALL LIKELY	ROW TOTAL
VERY LIKELY	4 3.2 44.4% 57.1% 20.0%	4 4.5 44.4% 40.0% 20.0%	1 1.4 11.1% 33.3% 5.0%	9 45.0%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY	3 3.9 27.3% 42.9% 15.0%	6 5.5 54.5% 60.0% 30.0%	2 1.7 18.2% 66.7% 10.0%	11 55.0%
COLUMN TOTAL	7 35.0%	10 50.0%	3 15.0%	20 100.0%

CHI-SQUARE	D.F.	SIGNIFICANCE
0.676	2	N.S.

TABLE 4

THIRD WORLD AND WESTERN MALE AND FEMALE READERS IN TERMS OF HOW INTERESTING THEY FIND THE NEWSPAPERS THEY READ
(SEX BY INTEREST, CONTROLLING FOR MALES)

COUNT EXP VAL ROW PCT COL PCT TOT PCT	Int VERY MUCH	MUCH	SOME	VERY LITTLE/ NOT AT ALL	ROW TOTAL
MALE	4 3.5 20.0% 57.1% 10.0%	7 7.0 35.0% 50.0% 17.5%	6 6.5 30.0% 46.2% 15.0%	3 3.0 15.0% 50.0% 7.5%	20 50.0%
FEMALE	3 3.5 15.0% 42.9% 7.5%	7 7.0 35.0% 50.0% 17.5%	7 6.5 35.0% 53.8% 17.5%	3 3.0 15.0% 50.0% 7.5%	20 50.0%
COLUMN TOTAL	7 17.5%	14 35.0%	13 32.5%	6 15.0%	40 100.0%

CHI-SQUARE	D.F.	SIGNIFICANCE
0.21	3	N.S.

TABLE 5

THIRD WORLD AND WESTERN MALE READERS IN TERMS OF HOW INTERESTING THEY FIND THE NEWSPAPERS THEY READ
(COUNTRY BY INTEREST, CONTROLLING FOR MALES)

COUNT EXP VAL ROW PCT COL PCT TOT PCT	Int VERY MUCH	MUCH	SOME	VERY LITTLE/ NOT AT ALL	ROW TOTAL
THIRD WORLD READERS	1 2.0 10.0% 25.0% 5.0% -1.0	4 3.5 40.0% 57.1% 20.0% .5	3 3.0 30.0% 50.0% 15.0% 0.0	2 1.5 20.0% 66.7% 10.0% .5	10 50.0%
WESTERN READERS	3 2.0 30.0% 75.0% 15.0% 1.0	3 3.5 30.0% 42.9% 15.0% -.5	3 3.0 30.0% 50.0% 15.0% 0.0	1 1.5 10.0% 33.3% 5.0% -.5	10 50.0%
COLUMN TOTAL	4 20.0%	7 35.0%	6 30.0%	3 15.0%	20 100.0%

CHI-SQUARE	D.F.	SIGNIFICANCE
1.47619	3	N.S.

TABLE 6

THIRD WORLD AND WESTERN FEMALE READERS IN TERMS OF HOW INTERESTING THEY FIND THE NEWSPAPERS THEY READ (COUNTRY BY INTEREST, CONTROLLING FOR FEMALES)

COUNT EXP VAL ROW PCT COL PCT TOT PCT	Int VERY MUCH	MUCH	SOME	VERY LITTLE/ NOT AT ALL	ROW TOTAL
THIRD WORLD READERS	1 1.5 10.0% 33.3% 5.0%	3 3.5 30.0% 42.9% 15.0%	3 3.5 30.0% 42.9% 15.0%	3 1.5 30.0% 100.0% 15.0%	10 50.0%
WESTERN READERS	2 1.5 20.0% 66.7% 10.0%	4 3.5 40.0% 57.15 20.0%	4 3.5 40.0% 57.1% 20.0%	0 1.5 0.0% 0.0% 0.0%	10 50.0%
COLUMN TOTAL	3 15.0%	7 35.0%	7 40.0%	3 15.0%	20 100.0%

CHI-SQUARE	D.F.	SIGNIFICANCE
3.618	3	N.S.

Content, Geography, and Source Consonance Among the U.S. Networks in Foreign News Coverage

Abstract

Media sociology has identified several factors that influence the content of news. These factors, it is argued, lend a certain character to news within and across different media outlets. This paper studied the character of foreign news on the networks for one year (1989) with regard to its distribution and consonance.

The study found that network news was consonant as far as its content, geography, and use of sources was concerned. Further, its distribution as far as these variables were concerned was skewed. Political, followed by crime news, was the major topic of foreign news. Also, networks shared approximately half of their coverage in terms of actual content. The geography of network news emphasized Europe and the Middle East and deemphasized Africa and the Pacific. And, the networks relied largely on institutional sources for news. The implications of such consonance in itself are large for the "marketplace of ideas." Coupled with a skewed distribution, such consonance has serious implications for international understanding.

Jyotika Ramaprasad
School of Journalism
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL 62901
(618) 453-3277

Paper to be presented to the International Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication at the 1991 National Convention in Boston, MA.

Content, Geography, and Source Consonance Among the U.S. Networks in Foreign News Coverage

Introduction

Beginning with White's[1] classic gatekeeping study, research in media sociology has identified forces which shape the content of news. Two early studies located social control in the newsroom[2] and technological factors[3]. The research tradition gathered momentum in the 1970s and led to the identification of other micro and macro level factors such as personal biases and values[4], values of the workplace,[5] routines of news production,[6] organizational imperatives,[7] and ideology.[8]

A possible influence of these forces on the content of news is the skewed distribution of news across content, geography, and source categories. But this is not the only effect. These forces also, it is argued, stamp the media with uniformity.

In linking the results of this research tradition to those of the dominant media effects tradition, Noelle-Neumann[9] returns us to the concept of the powerful mass media. She argues that the "consonance of reporting and editorial comment, reinforced by [ubiquity and] cumulation of periodical repetition in the media" eliminates the "protective mechanism" of selective perception which is the rationale for the limited effects argument. Such a theory underscores the importance of studying distribution of and uniformity in media content.

Within the context of the distribution and consonance effects of the factors influencing news content, the purpose of this study is to locate content, geographic, and source concentrations and consonance, if any, in the foreign news broadcast by the three U.S. networks' (ABC, CBS, and NBC).

Distribution of News

Researchers have studied content, geographic, and source distribution effects and their interaction either singly or multiply and for domestic, foreign, and/or international news (news from several countries about several countries). In fact, the Third World's call for a New International Information Order was based on the perception of content, geographic, and source bias, and resulted in a spate of studies to document the presence or otherwise of the same. And, the theory building effort in this area has identified proximity (geography) and deviance (content) as two major predictors of foreign news coverage.[10]

Riffe and Shaw[11] found that the coverage of the Third World in two U.S. papers was "strongly oriented towards conflict" and that politics and international relations were also major topics in foreign news. They also found that the Third World was not underrepresented in their sample newspapers. Visually mapping the international coverage of news, Gerbner and Marvanyi[12] found evidence of geographic bias. Sreberny-Mohammadi, et al.,[13] found that political news was the universal foci in international news reporting. Their other universal finding was the presence of regionalism (attention to a country's own geographic region). After this, the geographic distribution of news was explained by the consistent newsmakers (United States, for example), the "hot spots" (more often found in the developing world), and areas of invisibility, in that order. The authors also found that home agencies/correspondents, followed by Western agencies, were the major news sources.

The tendency of the media to focus on certain content, regions, and sources is not a characteristic of foreign news alone; it is documented even for domestic news. Dominick[14] found that certain places such as Washington, D.C., California, and New York are "news-privileged." The concentration of stories from these areas produces an "eclipse" effect wherein one or two regions monopolize news time at the cost of others.

While Whitney, et al.,[15] studied the content, geographic, and source distribution of both domestic and international news, their focus was largely on the geographic and source distribution of domestic news. They found confirmation for Dominick's findings with regard to geographic concentration. They also found that the news tended "to favor established institutional sources, most especially governmental, military, political, business, and professional sources."

Consonance in News

Apart from distribution effects, studies have also documented the "consonance" effect. Focusing on consonance in network news, Lemert[16] found that "70% of the stories carried by one network were also covered by at least one of the other two." Also, networks tended to locate stories in the same order and even duplicated day-to-day variations in the emphasis given to a story. Fowler and Showalter[17] found similarity among networks not only in their news topics, but also in the number of audio visual techniques used and the ranking of each story segment within each day's newscast.

In a study of business coverage, Dominick[18] found that the networks spent similar amounts of time on business news and also ranked topics within business content similarly. Further, he found no inter-network differences in the tone of these stories. A study of news about the TWA hostage crisis[19] revealed homogeneous coverage among networks in number of and time spent on stories, in story type, and in topical emphasis.

In an even more specific study, Foote and Steele[20] found that "(t)wo out of three networks agreed on the same lead 91% of the time." Only rarely (6.8% of the time) did two networks agree on a lead story that a competitor did not have in its newscast. Further, during the few times (9% of the time) when none of the networks had the same lead, all three networks usually carried the leads of their competitors in the top six stories. Altogether, networks had only seven exclusive leads.

A few studies comparing the three networks with CNN are also available. A study conducted by the Media Institute[21] found that while CNN's business and economic reporting was "more balanced and less sensational" than that of the networks, it was also of less depth, and that the news priorities of CNN and the networks were not very different. A more recent study[22] found that the three networks' and CNN's topics were significantly correlated. In terms of story choice though the three networks and CNN exhibited differences.

These studies have partially filled the lacuna which Lemert[23] observed, in 1974, in research "directed at whether there is duplication among competing network television newscasts."

The Present Study

Overall, most studies however have concentrated either on distribution effects or on consonance effects. Studies of foreign news particularly have tended to focus on distribution effects, and while such study assumes consonance it does not always document it.

This study looks at both distribution and consonance effects for foreign news.

Method

This is a content analytic study. The three networks' (ABC, CBS, and

NBC) half-hour evening newscasts were coded for foreign news content using the the Vanderbilt Television News Archives' Television News Index and Abstracts.

The sample year was 1989. Eight constructed weeks, four for the first half of the year and four for the second half, were picked using random selection. Altogether, the sample included 40 days for a total of 120 newscasts.

Foreign news content was defined as reference to a foreign country; only the purely domestic stories were excluded. Once "foreign content" was identified, each such story was coded. A story was defined as a topic introduced by the anchor.[24] The story could be "read only." Or the anchor could "lead into" correspondent report(s), and further, come back to wrap up the topic, making it all one story. The various identified parts--lead in, field reports, wrap-up--would be segments (physically separated by white space in the Vanderbilt Archives abstracts) of the story.

Number of segments in each story and length were coded at the story level. (The Vanderbilt Archives' abstracts do not provide length of each segment.) The coding then shifted to segment level variables.

For content, topic (for example, politics) and actual shared content were recorded. That is, instead of relying only on topic similarity or otherwise to measure consonance, record was made of whether networks carried the same segment, i.e., items which had basically the same information, though their emphasis may be different.[25]

For the geography of these segments, the following variables were coded: origin, name of country which was the subject of the segment, name of country where the segment was "happening," and location of the announcer. To enable further analysis of announcer location (for example, correspondent location), the announcer of the segment (anchor and/or correspondent) was also coded.

Origin attempted to measure U.S. presence in the story; its categories were foreign, foreign at home, and domestic abroad. For the other three geography variables, while the actual country name was coded during data collection, for the analysis this variable was recoded into regions.

One common method of grouping countries to measure geographic bias is by worlds: First, Second, and Third. This grouping, based largely on political systems and stage of development, has reflected NIIO concerns, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to place all countries neatly into these worlds. Yet another method of classification, based on physical contiguity, is by regions: North America, Central America, South America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe/USSR, the Middle East, Africa, Asia/South Asia, the Far East, and the Pacific. This system of classification because it is less sweeping might have more merit. Recognizing the limitations of these broad classifications, countries were recoded into the 10 physically contiguous regions.[26]

For source, two variables were used: type of source (for example, government official) and number of times each source was used within a segment. For the latter, the number would exceed one for any source type only if a different source from the same category was used at a different point in the segment (for example, two different men-on-the-street used at different times within a segment to comment on a situation).

Altogether, eight coders were used. Two intercoder reliability tests were done, both on non-sample dates, the first one after the coders had coded about half of the sample dates and the second one after all the sample dates were coded. The first reliability test identified three variables which had acceptable intercoder reliability [story length: 97%, country: 94% and announcer: 100%], four variables (origin, announcer location, source, and number of times source used) which had acceptable average intercoder reliability but with which some coders had difficulty, and three variables (location, topic, and shared content) with which all coders had some difficulty.

For origin, announcer location, source, and number of times source used, respective coders were required to recode the first set of sample dates after a clarification of rules. For the variables with which all coders had difficulty, a similar procedure was followed. Additionally, a second reliability test after all data were coded was also done. The final reliability figure was 93% for location, 90% for topic, and 99% for shared content. The reliability figures were calculated using Holsti's formula.[27]

Findings

Description of Data

Altogether, the sample specified 534 stories with number of segments ranging from 1 to 11 (Table 1). All those segments which the Vanderbilt Archive's abstracts simply referred to as "Report introduced" were dropped as no data could be coded for them. The remaining segments numbered 708.

The distribution of stories and segments across days and networks was quite even. The number of foreign stories averaged between four and five per day per network. Most stories had one or two segments. Only one story had 11 segments.

An analysis of the content, geography, and sources of the networks' foreign news is given below. Depending on the relevance, the analysis was done at the story or the segment level or at both levels. The story level analysis was included because the Vanderbilt Archives' abstracts record length (which was used for the correlation analysis) for the entire story and not for each segment. For story level analysis, the first segment was used to represent the story unless the first segment was a "Report introduced" segment which did not have any other data available for it. In that case, the second segment was used. While segments were not identical within a story with regard to all variables, the choice of the first segment to represent the story seemed to be the only and the most logical solution if it is assumed that placement indicates importance. Also, once the "Report Introduced" segment was removed, most stories had only one segment.[28]

Content of the Networks

Topic: A chi-square test revealed no significant association between topic and network for number of stories as well as segments indicating topic consonance among networks (Tables 2a and 2b). Pearson correlations between each pair of networks for the time spent on each topic (excluding "other") were also significant (the lowest was .99, p.=.00 between ABC and CBS). The topic priorities of the three networks were not very different. What were these topic priorities?

Political stories (271; 51%) and segments (373; 53%) were the most frequent followed, after a sharp drop, by crime stories (62; 12%) and segments (76; 11%). Hence foreign news was largely political news. Getting considerably less coverage were topics such as disaster and social.

Shared Segments: A more stringent analysis called for matching actually shared segments (Table 2c), i.e., segments that basically had the same content not just the same topic. CBS shared 137 (60% of its 230) segments with ABC and NBC shared 119 (87% of its 228) segments with ABC. NBC shared 122 (54% of its 228) segments with CBS.

Geography of the Networks

Origin: Again, no significant association was found between origin and network for both number of stories and segments indicating that their distribution across the origin categories was similar for the three networks.

Of the 534 stories, 336 (63%) were totally foreign, while 112 (21%) were domestic abroad and 86 (16%) were foreign at home (Table 3a). Of the 708 segments, 421 (60%) were foreign (Table 3b). The time spent on these story categories followed the same pattern with approximately 594 minutes on foreign news, 228 minutes on domestic abroad news, and 167 minutes on foreign at home news. While a larger percent of stories was purely foreign, together the domestic abroad and foreign at home categories (reflecting U. S. involvement) made up 37% of the total foreign news.

Region: Chi-square analysis revealed similarity among networks in distribution of stories and segments across regions. Also, pearson correlations based on time spent on these regions were significant between each pair of the three networks (the lowest was .87, p.=.00 between ABC and NBC).

What was the geographic distribution of the news on the networks? The region most often covered (161 stories; 31%) was Eastern Europe/USSR followed, after a sharp drop in number of stories (to 92), by the Middle East (Table 3a). The least covered region was the Pacific with three stories. For number of segments, the top two and bottom regions retained their ranks; only minor changes in rank order of other regions were present (Table 3b). In general, Western Europe was highly covered and Africa received very little coverage.

Location: Not all stories/segments had a physical location. The distribution of the ones that did was similar across networks for both stories and segments (Tables 3a and 3b). Pearson correlations based on length were significant between each pair of networks (with the lowest being .68, p=.02 between ABC and NBC).

Eastern Europe/USSR (84 stories, 23%; 93 segments, 19%) was the most frequent location. The Pacific, Asia, Africa, and South America were seldom a locale.

Interestingly, a comparison of the percentages for region and location, for both stories and segments, indicates that North America was more often a location than a region covered while Eastern Europe and the Middle East were more often regions covered than locations for the story/segment.

Announcer Location: Correlation analysis at the story level indicated consonance among networks in announcer location (with the lowest being .99, p.=.00 between ABC and NBC and between CBS and NBC).[29] Chi-square analysis at the segment level indicated consonance among networks (Table 3b).

The modal[30] location for the announcer was North America, largely a reflection of the location of the anchor. Of greater interest was the location of the correspondent. First, a crosstabulation revealed that the anchor announced approximately half (364; 51%) of the segments (Table 3b). Very few segments (15; 2%) used both the anchor and correspondent. Chi-square analysis showed no association between announcer used and network for segments, indicating similarity among networks in the distribution of segments between anchors and correspondents.

Correspondent Location: In 205 stories, the correspondent was the announcer (i.e., the first segment was "Report introduced"). For these stories, correlations based on time spent were significant between each pair of networks (with the lowest being .83, p.=.00 between ABC and NBC).[31] At the segment level, chi-square analysis revealed consonance among networks for correspondent location. Where did the networks locate their correspondents?

Again, the modal location of the correspondents (105 segments) was North America. After a sharp drop came Eastern Europe/USSR, followed by Western Europe. The Pacific did not have a single correspondent report and South America and Africa had very few.

Again, the percentage of segments for which correspondents were located in North America was considerably higher than the percentage of segments located in North America, which in turn was higher than the percentage of segments that covered North America. The only other region for which a similar increase occurred, but to a smaller extent, was Western Europe.

Sources of the Networks

Sources Used: As multiple coding of sources was done (i.e., each segment was coded for all the different sources it used), a pearson correlation on number of different types of sources used was done in place of the chi-square analysis to measure consonance.[32]

The pearson correlation on number of different types of sources used was significant between each pair of the three networks for stories (the lowest was .93, p.=.00 between CBS and NBC) and segments (the lowest was .95, p.=.00 between ABC and NBC) indicating consonance in the type of sources used by the networks.

For both stories (124; 41%) and segments (200; 42%), government sources were used the most often and industry officials the least often (stories: 6, 2%; segments: 8, 2%) (Tables 4a and 4b). On the whole, institutional sources (all except man-on-street) were used more often than non-institutional sources (man-on-street).

Number of Times Sources Used: A pearson correlation was also done on number of times each type of source was used. At the story level, it was significant (with the lowest being .90, p.=.00 between ABC and NBC). Interestingly, at the segment level, it was significant between ABC and CBS but not significant between ABC and NBC and CBS and NBC. On the whole, while government sources still topped the list and industry officials were still the least used, comparatively NBC tended to make less use of goverment and more use of lay sources.

Discussion and Conclusion

ABC, CBS, and NBC's evening newscasts were similar in several respects. They used topics with similar frequency and even spent similar amounts of time on them. Also, more than half of the story segments were shared between pairs of networks.

The geography of the networks was similar too, in frequency and time spent, not only for origin and region covered, but also for location of the segment and announcer. Finally, the types of sources networks used were similar and, with the exception of NBC, the amount of use of types of sources was also similar. NBC tended to differ somewhat from ABC and CBS in other respects too as evident from the fact that the lowest correlations between networks usually involved NBC.

Such consonance in news across content, geography, and source categories may be the result of such shared influences on news professionals and their organizations as news judgment and resource constraints. The implications of such consonance, it is often argued, are serious in terms of the "marketplace of ideas" which is the foundation of the libertarian press system of the United States. Fowler and Showalter,[33] however, raise an important question that they think television news directors should ask themselves: "what is the distinction between a healthy similarity and an unhealthy conformity in network news?" Lemert[34] asks the same question in the context of the fact that the networks are after all "covering the same world." The important issue here is that the question of consonance cannot be addressed separately from the question of the distribution of this consonance. And what was this distribution like at least within this study?

First, foreign news, to a considerable extent, was defined by U. S. involvement; that is, foreign at home and domestic abroad news accounted for a large percentage of foreign news. Second, while political news dominated the topics of foreign news, it was followed by crime news. Third, and more serious, certain regions of the world received more coverage: Western Europe continued to be highly covered, the "hot spot" was Eastern Europe receiving the largest number of stories (because of the events of 1989), and the invisible areas of the world continued to remain so.

Fourth, in terms of location of the segment and the correspondent, the Eurocentric tendency of networks was evident. The percent of segments in which correspondents were located in Western Europe was larger than the percent of segments occurring in Western Europe which in turn was larger than the percent of segments covering Western Europe. A similar, but more exaggerated, pattern was seen with regard to North America. While some of this increase in correspondent location over segment location can be explained by the fact that U. S. networks were studied, some of the increase in segment location over region covered was probably due to foreign at home coverage.

Finally, while the layperson was often used as a source of news particularly as compared with industry and political sources, a regrouping of sources by institutional (all except man-on-street) and non-institutional sources revealed the networks' tendency to seek out the former sources.

The question "What should the ideal distribution of news have been given the events in the world at a particular time?" is just as hard to answer as the question "How much consonance is too much?" It might be easier to recognize a skewed distribution. The distribution of news on the networks in 1989 was skewed. If this skewed and highly consonant view of the world is the cognitive map that the public has, then its implications for the "marketplace of ideas" are indeed serious. Particularly, when it comes to foreign news coverage, its implications for international understanding also need to be considered.

Table 1
Distribution of Stories and Segments by Day, Network, and Number of Segments

	STORY		SEGMENT	
N =	534		708	
Day	n=	%*	n=	%
Monday	112	21	142	20
Tuesday	119	22	146	21
Wednesday	100	19	146	21
Thursday	94	18	139	20
Friday	109	20	135	19
Network				
ABC	178	33	250	35
CBS	171	32	230	33
NBC	185	35	228	32
Number of Segments				
1	239	45		
2	240	45		
3	24	5		
4	15	3		
5	8	2		
6	4	1		
7	3	1		
11	1	0		

*Rounded.

Table 2a
CONTENT OF THE NETWORKS
Distribution of Stories by Topic, by Network

	ABC		CBS		NBC		Total	
Topic	n=	%*	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%
Political	85	48	88	52	98	53	271	51
Diplomacy	17	10	25	15	16	9	58	11
Economic	11	6	14	8	9	5	34	6
Disaster	7	4	6	4	12	7	25	5
Crime	23	13	18	11	21	11	62	12
Social	8	5	5	3	7	4	20	4
Human Interest	13	7	7	4	11	6	31	6
Military	8	5	6	4	9	5	23	4
Other	6	3	2	1	2	1	10	2
Total	178	100	171	100	185	100	534	100

*Rounded.

Table 2b
CONTENT OF THE NETWORKS
Distribution of Segments by Topic, by Network

	ABC		CBS		NBC		Total	
Topic	n=	%*	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%
Political	125	50	128	56	120	53	373	53
Diplomacy	22	9	29	13	23	10	74	11
Economic	11	4	18	8	12	5	41	6
Disaster	12	5	7	3	12	5	31	4
Crime	30	12	23	10	23	10	76	11
Social	10	4	6	3	11	5	27	4
Human Interest	14	6	8	4	12	5	34	5
Military	19	8	9	4	13	6	41	6
Other	7	3	2	1	2	1	11	2
Total	250	100	230	100	228	100	708	100

*Rounded.

Table 2c
CONTENT OF THE NETWORKS
Number of Shared Segments between Networks

	CBS	NBC
ABC	137	119
CBS		122

Table 3a
GEOGRAPHY OF THE NETWORKS
Distribution of Stories by Origin, Region, Segment Location, Announcer Location, Announcer, and Correspondent Location, by Network

	ABC		CBS		NBC		Total	
Origin	n=	%*	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%
Foreign	121	68	98	58	117	63	336	63
Foreign at Home	25	14	30	18	31	17	86	16
Domestic Abroad	32	18	43	25	37	20	112	21
Total	178	100	171	100	185	100	534	100
Region (stories on world org'tions removed)								
North America	7	4	4	2	3	2	14	3
Central America	21	12	19	11	19	10	59	11
South America	7	4	11	7	10	6	28	5
Western Europe	25	14	20	12	21	12	66	13
East Europe/USSR	49	28	49	29	63	35	161	31
Middle East	35	20	31	18	26	14	92	18
Africa	11	6	8	5	7	4	26	5
Asia/S. Asia	3	2	7	4	13	7	23	4
Far East	15	9	19	11	19	10	53	10
Pacific	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1
Total	174	100	169	100	182	100	525	100
Location								
North America	19	14	16	13	14	12	49	13
Central America	17	12	16	13	14	12	47	13
South America	5	4	8	7	7	6	20	5
Western Europe	23	17	16	13	13	12	52	14
East Europe/USSR	27	20	25	20	32	28	84	23
Middle East	22	16	16	13	11	10	49	13
Africa	10	7	6	5	6	5	22	6
Asia/S. Asia	2	1	8	7	7	6	17	5
Far East	11	8	11	9	8	7	30	8
Pacific	2	1	1	1	1	1	4	1
Total	138	100	123	100	113	100	374	100

Table 3a: Continued

	ABC		CBS		NBC		Total	
Ann'cer Location	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%
North America	124	70	120	70	138	75	382	72
Central America	5	3	4	2	6	3	15	3
South America	1	1	3	2	1	1	5	1
Western Europe	16	9	11	6	8	4	35	7
East Europe/USSR	13	7	15	9	15	8	43	8
Middle East	9	5	7	4	4	2	20	4
Africa	3	2	2	1	4	2	9	2
Asia/S. Asia	2	1	6	4	4	2	12	2
Far East	5	3	3	2	5	3	13	2
Pacific	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	178	100	171	100	185	100	534	100
Announcer								
Anchor	106	60	97	57	125	68	328	61
Correspondent	72	40	73	43	60	32	205	38
Anchor-Cor'dent	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
Total	178	100	171	100	185	100	534	100
Correspondent Location								
North America	19	26	24	33	15	25	58	28
Central America	5	7	4	6	6	10	15	7
South America	1	1	3	4	1	2	5	2
Western Europe	15	21	10	14	8	13	33	16
East Europe/USSR	13	18	15	21	15	25	43	21
Middle East	9	13	7	10	4	7	20	10
Africa	3	4	2	3	4	7	9	4
Asia/S. Asia	2	3	5	7	4	7	11	5
Far East	5	7	3	4	3	5	11	5
Pacific	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	72	100	73	100	60	100	205	100

*Rounded.

Table 3b
·GEOGRAPHY OF THE NETWORKS
Distribution of Segments by Origin, Region, Segment Location, Announcer Location, Announcer, and Correspondent Location, by Network

	ABC		CBS		NBC		Total	
Origin	n=	%*	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%
Foreign	155	62	132	57	134	59	421	60
Foreign at Home	46	18	45	20	48	21	139	20
Domestic Abroad	49	20	53	23	46	20	148	21
Total	250	100	230	100	228	100	708	100
Region (stories on world org'tions removed)								
North America	9	4	7	3	4	2	20	3
Central America	30	12	28	12	31	14	89	13
South America	9	4	13	6	13	6	35	5
Western Europe	33	14	27	12	22	10	82	12
East Europe/USSR	62	25	55	24	66	29	183	26
Middle East	59	24	46	20	38	17	143	21
Africa	11	5	9	4	7	3	27	4
Asia/S. Asia	9	4	13	6	21	9	43	6
Far East	22	9	29	13	22	10	73	11
Pacific	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	0
Total	245	100	228	100	225	100	698	100
Location								
North America	29	16	23	14	22	16	74	15
Central America	22	12	21	13	19	14	62	13
South America	6	3	9	6	8	6	23	5
Western Europe	27	15	20	12	14	10	61	13
East Europe/USSR	34	19	27	17	32	24	93	19
Middle East	33	18	21	13	14	10	68	14
Africa	10	5	7	4	6	4	23	5
Asia/S. Asia	5	3	12	7	10	7	27	6
Far East	16	9	21	13	10	7	47	10
Pacific	2	1	1	1	1	1	4	1
Total	184	100	162	100	136	100	482	100

Table 3b: Continued

	ABC		CBS		NBC		Total	
Ann'cer Location	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%
North America	163	65	149	65	165	72	477	67
Central America	10	4	7	3	10	4	27	4
South America	3	1	4	2	1	0	8	1
Western Europe	24	10	18	8	11	5	53	8
East Europe/USSR	19	8	18	8	16	7	53	8
Middle East	15	6	12	5	5	2	32	5
Africa	3	1	3	1	4	2	10	1
Asia/S. Asia	3	1	7	3	8	4	18	3
Far East	10	4	12	5	8	4	30	4
Pacific	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	250	100	230	100	228	100	708	100
Announcer								
Anchor	123	49	107	47	134	59	364	51
Correspondent	122	49	118	51	89	39	329	47
Anchor-Cor'dent	5	2	5	2	5	2	15	2
Total	250	100	230	100	228	100	708	100
Correspondent Location								
North America	36	30	41	35	28	32	105	32
Central America	10	8	7	6	10	11	27	8
South America	3	3	4	3	1	1	8	2
Western Europe	23	19	16	14	11	12	50	15
East Europe/USSR	19	16	18	15	16	18	53	16
Middle East	15	12	11	9	5	6	31	9
Africa	3	3	3	3	4	5	10	3
Asia/S. Asia	3	3	6	5	8	9	17	5
Far East	10	8	12	10	6	7	28	9
Pacific	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	122	100	118	100	89	100	329	100

*Rounded.

Table 4a
SOURCES OF THE NETWORKS
Distribution of Stories by Sources Used and Amount of Use of Sources, by Networks

	ABC				CBS				NBC				Total			
	Use		Amt		Use		Amt		Use		Amt		Use		Amt	
Srce	n=	%*	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%
GOff	37	40	59	43	48	41	68	45	39	42	55	48	124	41	182	45
IOff	2	2	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	6	2	7	2
Pol	4	4	5	4	5	4	7	5	4	4	5	4	13	4	17	4
Exp	21	23	34	25	28	24	35	23	13	14	13	11	62	21	82	20
SpIn	11	12	13	9	11	10	13	9	9	10	9	8	31	10	35	9
MOS	18	19	25	18	22	19	25	17	25	27	31	27	65	22	81	20
T	93	100	138	100	116	100	151	100	92	100	115	100	301	100	404	100

*Rounded.

Table 4b
SOURCES OF THE NETWORKS
Distribution of Segments by Sources Used and Amount of Use of Sources, by Networks

	ABC				CBS				NBC				Total			
	Use		Amt		Use		Amt		Use		Amt		Use		Amt	
Srce	n=	%*	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%
GOff	67	43	102	46	73	41	122	49	60	44	83	48	200	42	307	48
IOff	2	1	2	1	4	2	5	2	2	1	2	1	8	2	9	1
Pol	6	4	7	3	8	5	10	4	6	4	7	4	20	4	24	4
Exp	36	23	54	24	36	20	46	18	20	15	22	13	92	20	122	19
SpIn	15	10	17	8	18	10	21	8	13	9	13	8	46	10	51	8
MOS	31	20	39	18	38	22	46	18	37	27	46	27	106	23	131	20
T	157	100	221	100	177	100	250	100	138	100	173	100	472	100	644	100

*Rounded.

1. David M. White, "The 'Gatekeeper': A Case Study in the Selection of News," Journalism Quarterly, 27: 383-390 (Fall 1950).

2. Warren Breed, "Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis," Social Forces, 33: 326-335 (May 1955).

3. Kurt Lang and Gladys Engel Lang, "The Unique Perspective of Television and its Effect: A Pilot Study," in Wilbur Schramm and Donald Roberts, eds., The Process and Effects of Mass Communication (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1971).

4. White, op. cit.; Paul Snider, "Mr. Gates Revisited: A 1966 Version of the 1949 Case Study," Journalism Quarterly, 44: 419-427 (Autumn 1967); David L. Paletz and Robert M. Entman, Media, Power, Politics (New York: Free Press, 1981).

5. Bernard Roshco, Newsmaking (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

6. Peter Golding and Philip Elliott, Making the News (New York: Longman, Inc., 1979).

7. Edward J. Epstein, News from Nowhere (London: Tavistock Publications, 1973).

8. Klaus Bruhn Jensen, "News as Ideology: Economic Statistics and Political Ritual in Television Network News," Journal of Communication, 37: 8-27 (Winter 1987); Gaye Tuchman, "The Exception Proves the Rule: The Study of Routine News Practices," in Paul M. Hirsch, Peter V. Miller and F. Gerald Kline, eds., Strategies for Communication Research, (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1977); Todd Gitlin, The Whole World is Watching (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980).

9. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "Return to the Concept of Powerful Mass Media," Studies of Broadcasting, 9: 65-76 (1973).

10. Tsan-Kuo Chang, Pamela J. Shoemaker and Nancy Brendlinger, "Determinants of International News Coverage in the U.S. Media," Communication Research, 14: 396-414 (August 1987).

11. Daniel Riffe and Eugene F. Shaw, "Conflict and Consonance: Coverage of Third World in Two U.S. Papers," Journalism Quarterly, 59: 617-626 (Winter 1982).

12. George Gerbner and George Marvanyi, "The Many Worlds of the World's Press," Journal of Communication, 27: 52-66 (Winter 1977).

13. Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi, et al., eds., "Foreign News in the Media: International Reporting in 29 Countries," UNESCO Reports and Papers on Mass Communication No 93 (Paris, France: UNESCO, 1985).

14. Joseph R. Dominick, "Geographic Bias in National TV News," Journal of Communication, 27: 94-99 (Autumn 1977).

15. D. Charles Whitney, et al., "Geographic and Source Biases in Network Television News 1982-1984," Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 33: 159-174 (Spring 1989).

16. James B. Lemert, "Content Duplication by the Networks in Competing Evening Newscasts," Journalism Quarterly, 51: 238-244 (Summer 1974).

17. Joseph S. Fowler and Stuart W. Showalter, "Evening Network News Selection: A Confirmation of News Judgment," Journalism Quarterly, 51: 712-715 (Winter 1974).

18. Joseph R. Dominick, "Business Coverage in Network Newscasts," Journalism Quarterly, 58: 179-185, 191 (Summer 1981).

19. Tony Atwater, "Network Evening News Coverage of the TWA Hostage Crisis," Journalism Quarterly, 64: 520-525 (Summer-Autumn 1987).

20. Joe S. Foote and Michael E. Steele, "Degree of Conformity in Lead Stories in Early Evening Network TV Newscasts," Journalism Quarterly, 63: 19-23 (Spring 1986).

21. The Media Institute, CNN vs. the Networks: Is More News Better News? (Washington, D.C.: The Media Institute, 1983).

22. Guido H. Stempel III, "Topic and Story Choice of Five Network Newscasts," Journalism Quarterly, 65: 750-752 (Fall 1988).

23. Lemert, op. cit.

24. Fowler and Showalter, op. cit.

25. Fowler and Showalter, ibid.

26. This classification was based on the one used in John C. Merrill, ed., Global Journalism (New York: Longman, 1991).

27. Ole R. Holsti, Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1969). Intercoder calculations for story length allowed a margin of error.

28. The percentage of stories for which segments differed were as follows:

1. Topic: 5%
2. Origin: 7%
3. Country: 4% (for region, the variable used in this study based on collapsing of countries, the percentage would be even smaller)
4. Location: 4% (11% if "no location" in one segment and "location" in another segment are considered different)
5. Announcer Location: 19%
6. Correspondent Location: 11%

29. For announcer location, story level figures are supplied in the tables. However, expected cell sizes were inadequate to interpret the chi-square.

30. Even though North America was the modal location, the number is an underestimate of North America as an announcer location because of the removal of the "Report introduced" segments (usually done by the anchor from the studio) from the data set.

31. For correspondent location, story level figures are supplied in the tables. However, expected cell sizes were inadequate to interpret the chi-square.

32. As data on length of time each source was on the air was not available, pearson correlations on length were not used in this analysis.

33. Fowler and Showalter, op. cit.

34. Lemert, op. cit.

Comparative analysis of reporters by gender on CNN World Report

Mercedes K. Morris Garcia
Department of Telecommunications
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47408

Author Notes

The author gratefully acknowledges the invaluable guidance and assistance of Christine Ogan in the execution of the study and the comments on a draft of this paper by Kathy Krendl, W.J. Potter and three anonymous reviewers.

This paper was presented before the "Women and Television" session sponsored by the Commission on the Status of Women, at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, convened in Boston, MA, in August 1991.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF REPORTERS BY GENDER ON CNN WORLD REPORT

Abstract

The status of women is examined by comparing the number of female reporters on CNN World Report, which has been called the first "global newscast." The analysis is framed by UNESCO development goals of increasing the participation of women in communication industries worldwide, especially women in developing countries.

It content analyzes a data base of 547 news items aired on CNN World Report to examine the differences in gender of reporters in eight regions of the world. Gender of reporter is cross-tabulated with economic and item content variables. Findings suggest gross national product, region, news topics and news types relate to gender and could be considered indicators of social stratification systems. Results partially support previous findings which suggest large cash economies are related to higher gender stratification in employment sectors.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF REPORTERS BY GENDER ON CNN WORLD REPORT

In 1980, five years into the United Nations Decade for Women, the World Conference in Copenhagen identified mass communication as a development component having "special importance" for the improvement of the status of women (UNESCO, 1985, p. 2). In fact, the programming cycle leading up to the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held in Nairobi in 1985, created a specific subprogram to address the issue; it was titled "Contribution of the Media to Promoting Equality Between Women and Men and Strengthening Women's Access to and Participation in Communication" (UNESCO, 1985, p. 14).

The stated targets of UNESCO's efforts were to promote the training, employment and advancement of women in the various fields and professions of communication, "particularly those from which they have traditionally been excluded" (p. 14). This model implied, if not assumed, that the status of women in communication industries was related to a nation's development level.

The relationship between mass communication and a country's development status has long been an issue with a number of researchers (see, for example, Lerner, 1958; Pye, 1963; Schramm, 1964), yet few have explored the comparative impact of communication specifically on the development of the status of women. Valdivia (1991) notes that most of the literature on development theory, including dependency and modernization culture, a fact Western feminists "have often ignored" (p. 85) when conducting research. Nicole-Claude Mathieu (1988) notes that because of this selective ignorance, Western feminists have often been charged with "ethnocentrism, imperialism, and even racism" (p. 5) by indigenous women when making observations about the status of females within a specific cultural space.

In more theoretical terms, Park (1991) has suggested that dependency and political economy frameworks do not take into account cultural complexities, therefore cannot understand culture as a set of practices reflecting "qualitative meaning construction" (p. 23). More specifically, Safilios-Rothschild (1982a and 1982b) made the distinction in defining what has actually been established in terms of defining the concept "status of women" in a given cultural context. While research findings suggest that there is considerable inequality between men and women in terms of wealth and power, "few researchers go on to point out that the inequality is a result of an existing social hierarchy based on gender, i.e., of an operating sex stratification system" (Safilios-Rothschild, 1985, p. 1).

It is further argued that while the wealth and power of women can be readily measured at the aggregate level, measures of prestige and gender stratification systems can be best studied and measured culturally through in-depth community research. Marshall (1985) also finds culture has an effect and suggests that cultural region appears to be the "strongest predictor of female rates of educational and economic participation and female-to-male sex ratio" (p. 229). Theobald (1980) has suggested that women appear to find the patterns of process and cooperation required in the communications era easier than men. This might suggest that the communications labor market is more open to women - and therefore an excellent sector for analyzing the evolving status of women - since "the dominant ways of looking at the world now reflect communications realities rather than industrial realities" (Theobald, 1980, 19).

The issue of women's participation in communication has usually been approached from the perspective that both national development levels and the status of women stand to gain from equality at all professional levels. In examining women's feature services, Rush and Ogan (1989), for example, maintain that communication becomes a "focal variable" in development, in terms of equitable access, production, distribution and consumption of media products across cultures. Similarly, in examining the comparative employment patterns of women in communication, Gallagher (1981) found that throughout the world women were virtually absent from the top managerial and executive positions. Although Gallagher's research on gender of reporters was not specific, it was noted that the few existing women reporters handled traditional "soft" news and features, while the "hard" and "spot" news were largely the responsibility of male reporters.

To date, little research has been done to compare the differences in gender of reporters between First and Third World countries (Steeves, 1989). As Valdivia (1991) notes, scholarly discussion concerning international communication rarely includes issues of gender. In examining the differences between First and Third World press systems, Krimsky (1990) points out that the role of women in different countries' media runs "fairly parallel with indigenous norms" (p.63), and is worth a study in itself. By comparing the gender of reporters in CNN World Report across regions, this study attempts to yield some diagnostic information which can aid future studies of regional culture variables which can account more directly for existing gender stratification systems.

To expand the breadth and specificity of available findings on the issue of women in the media at a global level, a call was also recently made (Steeves, 1989) for more comparative research. One reason for the paucity of research in this area is that data-gathering of this scope is fraught with difficulties not only because of the sheer numbers and the consequent financial constraints, but for political and cultural reasons which might lead research by a foreigner to be perceived as a threat or meddlesome. This paper, therefore, attempts to make a comparison using the international data available on CNN World Report.

Although CNN World Report was originally introduced in 1987 as a response to the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) debates, its focus quickly changed as documented by Dilawari, Stewart & Flournoy (1990), from a forum for development news to one concentrating on more news-oriented topics.

Individual country broadcasters send their contributions to CNN, which airs the items "unedited" and "uncensored," according to the anchor, during its weekly three-hour slot. CNN World Report has been seen as a provider of news from a non-Western perspective, through which contributing organizations can gain access to a global audience (Dilawari, et. al, 1990). It can therefore be seen as a unique "window on the world" (Hanson, 1991, p. 2) through which to examine the contents of voluntary news item contributions from broadcasting organizations at a global level.

Since women's access to the means of production and distribution of the products of communication has been identified as a salient development issue, this study aims to determine the number of female reporters on CNN World Report and whether a relationship exists between that number and country development levels, region, and kinds of news. The following was hypothesized:

(1) Number of female reporters would be negatively related to high GNP.

(2) Male-to-female reporter ratios would vary by region.

(3) Male-to-female reporter ratios would vary by news topic and type with more "features" and "soft" news reported by females.

METHOD

This study content analyzed 547 individual news stories aired on 15 segments of CNN World Report from February 1988 through October 1990. The 15 segments were randomly selected and content analyzed. The coded news stories were analyzed using SPSS-X and the data reflecting gender of reporter by region were cross-tabulated with (1) GNP, (2) region, (3) news type, and, (4) news topic. Unlike Dilawari (1990), stories filed by United Nations or other international channels (n=21) were not excluded from the sample. If no reporter appeared on camera, the voice was coded as male or female. If gender of reporter was not evident, it was not coded. Gender of reporter was not coded for only one item.

Because the data generated by this study were part of a larger effort to track the changes in CNN World Report over time, the coding schedule included items such as ownership patterns, length of broadcast, location, use and length of soundbites, identity of sources, tone of story, etc. (see Appendix A for complete coding schedule). There was a low 86% agreement among 11 coders (i.e., coding for whether a story was spot or feature) and intercoder reliability was measured at .80 (Holsti).

The topics used in the coding schedule were modeled after Sreberny-Mohammadi (1985) and Dilawari (1990). This study increased the topics from 20 to 50 to allow a more comprehensive and detailed analysis. News stories could be coded for up to three categories (primary, secondary and tertiary topic) from the list of topical options at Appendix A.

All topical categories were collapsed into either "hard news" or "soft news," where "hard news" included all political, military, economic, and crime stories. "Soft news" included all stories on social services, culture, education, personalities, human interest, etc.

1989 World Bank data were used for GNP and quality of life measures (life expectancy, daily calorie consumption, population percent in high school, etc.). GNP was preferred as a measure of development in the analysis since GNP data were more consistently available across countries. The GNP spread was collapsed into nine categories from "poorest" (under $1000 per capita per year) to "richest" (above $19,000 per capita per year) to facilitate cross-tabulation. The following is the list of collapsed GNP categories:

(1) Less than US$1,000
(2) 1,000 to 1,900
(3) 2,000 to 2,600
(4) 3,000 to 4,800
(5) 6,000 to 7,000
(6) 8,000 to 9,000
(7) 10,000 to 15,000
(8) 16,000 to 19,000
(9) Over 19,000

The 174 contributing countries were grouped into eight regions: Asia, Africa, Middle East, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Oceania.

News stories were also coded as either spot or feature items. The criterion used to differentiate betwen spot and feature news was whether timeliness would affect viewer interest. An item was considered a "spot" news story if the interest of the average viewer in the item could be expected to decrease over time. On the other hand, "feature" news items were defined as those relying on story elements other than timeliness for viewer appeal.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perhaps the most noteworthy finding of this study is that countries with higher GNPs had fewer female reporters contributing items to CNN World Report than countries with lower GNPs (see Appendix B for frequency distributions). Hypothesis 1, which stated that female gender of reporter would be negatively related to high GNP levels, was partially supported. Table 1 is the percentage of female and male reporters by GNP.

Table 1

Gender of Reporter by Gross National Product

Gender[b]	GNP[a]								
	(1	1-1,9	2-2,6	4-4,8	6-7	8-9	10-15	16-19	19+
Male (61%) (*n* = 236)	58%	48	71	33	50	35	73	61	81
Female (39%) (*n* = 151)	42	52	29	66	50	65	27	39	19
	n=76	*n*=44	*n*=66	*n*=12	*n*=34	*n*=17	*n*=45	*n*=57	*n*=36

Note. Reflects the number of news segments from nations for which GNP data was available. Missing cases of GNP (150) reflect data not provided to the World Bank by individual countries as well as submissions from international organizations such as United Nations channels.

[a] GNP is expressed in thousands of US$ per capita per annum. [b] *N*=387.

X^2 = 25.43, df = 8, *p* (.01.

The richest nations overall (with per capita GNP above $19,000) reflected the lowest percentage of female reporters

(19%). Japan, for example, was in this category with 11 of its 16 contributions reported by men, while all 15 of Switzerland's stories were reported by men.

Nations in the next lower GNP category ($16-19,000) had 39% of their stories reported by women, while nations in the next lower category ($10-15,000) had 27% female reporters. In this category, the third highest GNP, the United Kingdom contributed 14 stories of which only 3 were reported by women. On the other hand, Australia had a more equitable distribution with a full 7 of its 13 stories reported by women.

The relationship between gender and GNP also emerged in the inverse, so that female gender of reporter appeared positively related to low GNP levels. News contributions from the poorest countries reflected a more equitable participation of women than did those with higher GNP levels. Countries with less than $1,000 GNP per capita had 42% of their stories reported by females. Five of the six stories contributed by Egypt, for example, were reported by women. Stories from countries with a mid-level GNP ranging from $6,000 to $7,000 dollars per capita (n=34), were evenly split between male and female reporters. Ireland is a good case in point, with five of its 11 stories reported by women. Similarly, six of Spain's 14 contributions were reported by women.

For three nations (Argentina, Brazil and South Africa) in the $2000 to $2600 GNP per capita category, the hypothesized relationship did not appear. In fact, South Africa displayed alarming inequality with only one of 25 stories reported by a woman. Of Argentina's four stories, one was reported by a women, while none of Brazil's six stories were.

But, overall, nations with the lowest GNPs tended to have more equitable female-to-male reporter ratios. For example, the aggregate of nations with a per capita GNP lower than $1000 contributed 76 stories of which 42% were reported by women. In the $3000 to $4800 GNP per capita category, 66% were contributed by women. Hypothesis 1 was, therefore, partially supported by data indicating that lower GNP level appeared to be related to higher levels of female participation in countries contributing news segments to CNN World Report.

The second hypothesis - that the male to female reporter ratio would vary by region - was also supported. Table 2 is the list of countries by region and the number of news stories contributed by each.

The proportion of female reporters by region varied widely, supporting Marshall's (1985) assessment that region appears to be the strongest predictor of female educational and economic participation and female-to-male sex ratios in the labor force. Africa and West Europe reflected the most disproportionate male-to-female reporter ratio of all regions.

This study found that 22% of all stories from Africa were reported by women, which is similar to Hanson's (1991) finding of 19% female reporters for that region. Hanson's study, however, analyzes 14 stories from Africa, whereas this study examines 74.

Table 2

Number of News Stories by Region

Asia		Africa		Mid East		W Europe		E Europe		N America		L Amer/Car		Oceania		Total Cases
Afgan	13	Algeria	1	Bahrain	3	Andorra	1	Bulgar	12	Canada	11	Antigua	3	Austral	13	
Banglad	1	Angola	7	Cyprus	10	Austria	5	Czechos	12	U.S.	15	Argent	4			
Cambod	1	B Faso	1	Iran	3	Belgium	2	Hungary	13			Baham	2			
China	8	Burundi	1	Israel	2	Denmar	5	Poland	12			Barbad	1			
Guam	3	Camern	5	Jordan	4	Finland	9	Romania	3			Bolivia	3			
Hong K	4	Egypt	6	Lebanon	5	W Ger	15	USSR	8			Brazil	6			
India	3	Ethiop	7	Qatar	1	Greece	3	Yugosl	13			Colomb	6			
Indones	3	Ghana	6	Syria	1	Iceland	5					C Rica	2			
Japan	16	Liberia	1	Turkey	6	Ireland	11					Cuba	13			
Malaysi	1	Morocco	1	U Ar E	7	Italy	2					Ecuador	1			
Mongol	3	S Afric	25	Yemen	1	Netherl	1					El Salv	8			
N Korea	4	Tunisia	1	Yem Ar	1	Portug	2					Guatem	2			
Phillip	11	Zambia	2			Spain	14					Guyana	6			
Singap	10	Zimbab	5			Sweden	3					Haiti	1			
S. Kore	7	Namibia	5			Switzer	15					Mexico	3			
Sri Lan	3					U King	14					Nicara	13			
Taiwan	11											Peru	1			
V Nam	9											St Kitt	2			
												St Vinc	1			
												Uruguay	2			
												Venezue	4			
Total Column	111		74		44		107		73		26		84		13	532

It must be noted that Marshall's (1985) finding that female labor force participation levels were significantly higher in the African region was not reflected in the female-to-male ratio for news contributions from Africa. The findings of this analysis of CNN World Report are consistent, however, with secondary education and industrial sector ratios favoring males in Africa, since, as Marshall (1985) points out, development is related to a male advantage in the industrial and service sectors (see Table 3). This would also be consistent with the inequitable male-to-female ratio findings for Western Europe and North America, both heavily industrialized regions which displayed marked differences.

Hanson's finding of only 25% female reporters for Western Europe is also similar to the present study, which found 30%. In sharp contrast with Western Europe, Asian region had a full 54% of all stories reported by women.

Table 3

Gender of Reporter by Region

	Region							
Gender	Asia	Afri	Mid East	West Eur	East Eur	North Amer	Latin Amer	Ocea
Male (59%) (n = 313)	46%	78	59	70	52	62	52	46
Female (41%) (n = 217)	54	22	41	30	48	38	48	54
	n=104	n=74	n=51	n=105	n=73	n=26	n=84	n=13

Note. N = 530 and reflects one case in which gender of reporter is missing. The remaining missing cases reflect news items with no clear country of origin, such as United Nations segments.
$X^2 = 27.33$, df = 7, $p < .001$.

Forty-eight percent of the stories from Eastern Europe were reported by women, as were those from Latin America and the Caribbean. Hanson's (1991) finding of 44% female reporters for Eastern Europe resembles this study's findings. Results for Latin America are also consistent with observations by Marshall (1985) that secondary education sex ratios favor females in that region. The hypothesis that male-to-female reporter ratios would vary by region was, therefore, supported.

Primary story topics were diverse and spread out along 48 of the 50 categories (see Appendix C). Hypothesis 3, which stated that male-to-female reporter ratios would vary by news topic, was supported for all stories coded for "hard" and "soft" topics (see Table 4).

In proportion with their sharply unequal male-to-female reporter ratios, Africa and Western Europe displayed the greatest differences by topic. Of the 40 "hard" news items from Africa, only 17% were reported by women, in contrast with their total of 22% female reporters. The West European items reflected stratification as well, with 24% of the 46 "hard" news items reported by women, out of 30% total female reporters.

Table 4

Gender of Reporter by Topic

	Topic	
Gender	Hard	Soft
Male (60%) (n = 323)	64%	54
Female (40%) (n = 220)	36	46
	n = 255	*n* = 283

Note. *N* = 543 and reflects missing cases in which gender of reporter or topic of news item is unclear.
χ^2 = 8.88, df = 2, *p* (.05.

News stories from Latin American were more equitably distributed with 45% "hard" and 51% "soft" news items reported by women. Eastern Europe had 50% of its "hard" news items reported by women, while the Middle East had 48% (out of 41% women reporters). Asia was disproportionately low with only 41% of the "hard" news items reported by women, in spite of the fact that 54% of its reporters were women.

Hypothesis 3 also stated that male-to-female reporter ratio would vary by type of news, with more "features" reported by women. The aggregate of news items for which news type was coded revealed that only 30% of the "spot" news was reported by females, in contrast with 46% of the "features" (see Table 5).

An analysis of gender by news type according to region revealed even greater differences. For almost all of the regions, wide differences in gender according to the type of news ("spot" or "feature") emerged. The region with the greatest stratification by news type was Western Europe with only 12% of the "spot" news reported by women (who overall contributed 30% of the stories). Africa was more in proportion with 19% of "spot" news reported by women, compared to the 22% of the total reported by women. In contrast, 39% of the "spot" news from Latin America was reported by women, a disproportionately low figure given that 48% of the total contributions were reported by women.

Table 5

Gender of Reporter by News Type

	News Type	
Gender	Spot	Feature
Male (60%) (n = 323)	70%	55
Female (40%) (n = 220)	30	45
	n = 176	n = 367

Note. N = 543.
$\chi^2 = 11.69$, df = 1, $p < .001$.

Asia had 36% of its "spot" news reported by women, another disproportionately low figure given it had a total of 54% women reporters. The Middle East had 37% of the "spot" news reported by women, which was slightly more in proportion with its 41% female reporters. North America had 30% of all "spot" news reported by females, compared to the total of 38% female reporters. Hypothesis 3, that gender of reporter would vary by topic and type of news with more "features" and "soft" news topics reported by women was therefore supported by both the cross-tabulation of gender by type and gender by topic.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the shortcomings associated with using GNP as a measure of development across countries, using it yielded results supporting the thesis that economic development does not have the positive effects on gender equality predicted by modernization theory (Marshall, 1985). With the exception of nations in the $2,000-to-$2,600 GNP category, the relationship between gender of reporter and GNP was as hypothesized. The findings suggest that the size of a cash economy is related to gender inequalities.

The inequality of male-to-female ratios was also reflected in the analysis of gender according to news types and topics. Women continue to be relegated to positions of secondary importance from where they can report "soft" and "feature" stories, while males report the "hard" political and military news. Future research should take a closer look at regional cultural variables which could be accounting for differences in male-to-female reporter ratios by different news types and topics.

The results of the present study can be cautiously viewed as indicators of regional social stratification as identified by Safilios-Rothschild (1982a and 1982b). Studying culturally specific perceptions of the journalistic enterprise as a whole could be relevant to understanding gender inequalities. That journalism might be considered a "third-rate" occupation in some cultural contexts - and therefore might display a higher rate of female participation - could account for some of the variance.

Furthermore, indigenous patriarchal systems should be examined and compared across cultures before it can be suggested that patterns of industrialization influence existing male-to-female ratios in the employment sectors of developing nations. Future research should also examine longitudinal changes affecting the male-to-female ratios in high- and low-GNP nations.

These tentative findings can be enriched and inaccuracies corrected by conducting field research of the type suggested by Safilios-Rothschild (1985), which examines cultural differences in their context, provides solid corroboration for data contributed by broadcasters, and permits some measure of independent verification of economic indicators.

The results of the present research will improve by relying on data provided by individual broadcasters within each country rather than relying on CNN World Report. Data provided by individual broadcasters must nonetheless be viewed with caution since they could introduce problems of reliability and bias in cases for which no verification of information was possible.

Another potential source of inaccuracies is the GNP information which reflects individual country submissions to the World Bank. In the past the data have tended to be incomplete and outdated for many countries.

Using CNN World Report circumvents some biases, but also introduces others. The findings of this study cannot be viewed as representative of male-to-female ratios within countries, only of what is "exported" to CNN. This raises questions about the factors motivating individual nations to contribute to CNN World Report, an area which also will benefit from further research.

Development concerns itself with the self-actualization or emancipation of every human being. The self-actualization of women who have located themselves in visible positions can provide a glimpse of the indigenous norms governing a nation's day-to-day life. Thus, in contributing news items to what has been called the first "global newscast," women reporters on CNN World Report consciously or unconsciously reflect some of the norms governing gender stratification in their own countries. In this sense, the present study is an imperfect but useful global diagnostic. Examining the cultural site within which self-actualization takes place, can lead to a deeper understanding of gender stratification systems and greater awareness of insidious inequalities.

APPENDIX A

CODING SCHEDULE

V1* Coder's ID number
V2 Item number (placement in newscast)
V3 Month of broadcast
V4 Year of broadcast
V5 Country of broadcast
V6 Provider of item
    1-National channel
    2-Regional channel
    3-International channel
V7 Ownership of station
    1-Government owned and operated
    2-Government owned and privately operated
    3-Privately owned and operated
    4-United Nations channel
V8 Length of broadcast item (minutes, seconds)
V9 Setting of the item
    1-Predominantly urban
    2-Predominantly rural
    3-Region in the country (includes both urban and rural)
    4-Predominantly national (may combine rural and urban)
    5-Predominantly international or regional (several countries in the geographic region
V10 Location of item
    1-Home news at home
    2-Home news abroad
    3-Foreign news at home
    4-Foreign news abroad
    5-Other/uncertain
V11, V12, V13 Topics (Main and up to two subsidiary topics)
    1-Diplomatic/political activity between states
Politics within states:
    2-Internal conflict or crisis
    3-Elections, campaigns, appointments, government changes
    4-Other political, including legislation
Military and defense:
    5-Armed conflict or threat of
    6-Peace moves, negotiations, settlements
    7-Other, including arms deals, weapons, bases, exercises
Economic matters:
    8-Agreements on trade, tariffs, etc.
    9-Other international trade, imports, exports, trade balances International Bank, international cooperative exchange, foreign investment, debt
    10-Capital or state investment, stock issues (not aid)
    11-Stock exchange, share prices, dividends, profits (not new stock issues)
    12-Other economic performance, output, growth sales, etc. (whole economy or one enterprise)
    13-Prices, cost of living, inflation, etc.
    14-Industrial projects, factories, dams, ports, roads, etc.

*V=Variable

15-Agricultural matters, projects, crops, harvests, etc.
16-Industrial/labour relations, disputes, negotiations, wages
17-Monetary questions, exhange rates, money supply, banking, interest rates, guaranteed loans
18-Other economic/employment

International aid
19-Disaster or famine relief
20-Aid for economic purposes, e.g., industrial development
21-Military aid, weapons, advisers, training
22-Other aid, e.g., for education, family planning, etc.

Social services
23-Social problems in general (health/housing/illiteracy)
24-Educational provision
25-Health provision (not family planning)
26-Family planning
27-Other social services and social welfare matters

Crime, police, judicial, legal and penal
28-Non-political crime, police, judicial and penal activity
29-Political crime, as above
30-Non-criminal legal and court proceedings, e.g., claims for damage
31-Other crime/legal

Culture
32-Arts (theater, music, fine arts)
33-Archaeology
34-Mass communication
35-Crafts, folk culture
36-Tourism
37-Religion
38-Scientific, technical, medical

Sports
39-International
40-Non-international
41-Entertainment, show business (except personalities)

Personalities
42-Sports
43-Entertainers
44-Other
45-Human interest, odd happenings, animals, sex, etc.
46-Migration, urbanization, refugees
47-drugs
48-Human rights
49-Environment
50-Women's issues

V14 Type of news
1-Spot (In which lack of currency of news release negatively affects viewer interest in event)
2-Feature (Process or series of events in which time of release does not affect viewer interest)

V15, V16, V17, V18, V19 Length of sound bites (In sec. If translation, from beginning to end of translation, not beginning of source sound bite)

V20 Total number of sound bites and/or translations

V21, V22, V23, V24, V25 Source interviewed in sound bite (Actual sound bites and translations)
1-Official government source

2-Official government opposition
3-Government expert
4-Non-government opposition
5-Other non-government source
6-Non-government expert
7-Person(s) affected
8-Non-government or international government organization
V26, V27, V28, V29, V30 Nationality of source
1-Foreign (Western)
2-Foreign (East european)
3-Foreign (Third World)
4- Native
V31 Summary of source positions (Source included if "government sources said" rather than named)
1-No government sources
2-Only government sources
3-Some government sources and other sources
4-No sources attributed
5-IGO or NGO sources
6-Mix of government, IGO or NGO, and/or other sources
7-No sources consulted
V32, V33, V34, V35, V36 Sex of source (in sound bite)
1-Male
3-Female
V37 Number of standups
V38, V39, V40 Length of each standup (in seconds)
V41, V42, V43 Location of standup
1-In studio
2-In field
V44 Sex of reporterof story
1-Male
3-Female
V45 Were graphics used in story?
1-Yes
2-No
V46 Primary story subject
1-About an individual
2-About a country/ies
3-About a community/ies
V47 Is a problem mentioned in the story?
(If V47=3, go to V52)
1-Yes
3-No
V48 What is the nature of the problem?
1-Economic problem
2-Social problem
3-Political problem
4-Educational problem
5-Technical, scientific, medical, or environmental problem
6-Transportation/communication problem
7-Legal probelm
8-Military/defense problem
V49 How serious is the problem?
1-Problem discussed, but severity unspecified

2-Not serious
3-Serious, but getting better
4-Serious (no change mentioned)
5-Serious and getting worse
6-Mixed reaction to problem
V50 Who is to blame for problem?
1-No one to blame
2-Foreign entity to blame
3-Foreign government to blame
4-International system to blame
5-Domestic government to blame
6-Local company/institution
7-Local individual/population to blame
8-Previous government to blame
9-Mixed blame assigned
V51 Is there a solution to the problem? (Specified or not)
1-No solution proposed
2-Foreign initiative
3-Domestic government initiative
4-Domestic private intitiative
5-Individual initiative called for
6-International organization initiative
V52 Tone of story (overall)
1-Positive
2-Negative
3-Balanced
V53 Does item contain critical sources?
1-Yes
3-No
V54 Does item compare subject (usually a development project with original goals?
1-Yes
3-No
5-Not applicable
V55 Coder ID number
V56 Item number
V57 Does item compare the subject with government claims for success?
1-Yes
3-No
5-Not applicable
V58 Does item examine the relevance of subject to local or national needs?
1-Yes
3-No
5-Not applicable
V59 Does item describe or refer to a development project (i.e., literacy campaign, etc.)
1-Yes
3-No
V60 If the item concerns a development project, in what stage is the project?
1-Planning/talking stage
2-Just been initiated
3-Underway
4-Just completed

5-Completed and now being evaluated
V61 If a project, what degree of foreign/international involvement has there been?
1-Some foreign involvement, but cannot determine nature
2-Foreign funding
3-Foreign advising
4-No foreign involvment
5-Can't tell
V62 Is the word "development used in the story?
1-Yes
2-Yes and reference to women in developmen also made
3-No
V63 Components of development news. According to the UN, development news addresses cultural identity, basic needs and self reliance. Cultural identity is defined as having a positive attitude toward one's own historical values, institutions and accumulated knowledge, resisting excessive penetration from outside, and adapting modes of production to specific levels of human and social development. Basic needs refers to matters concerning the provision of a decent material living standard for the entire population, not just a privileged few; self-actualization or emancipation of every human being, and participation of the most needy in decisions about the allocation of available resources. Self-reliance means using one's own resources and ingenuity, accepting selected inputs from outside in the form of capital, technology, goods and know-how, confidence in one's own ability to develop, adapting the means of production to the local environment and resources, and matters concerning the empowerment of internal groups.
1-Cultural identity
2-Basic needs
3-Self-reliance
4-Cultural identity and self-reliance
5-Cultural identity and basic needs
6-Basic needs and self-reliance
7-Cultural identity, basic needs and self reliance
9-None of the above
V64* Gross national product
V65 Life expectancy
V66 Female illiteracy
V67 Total illiteracy
V68 Population growth
V69 Population per doctor
V70 Calories consumed daily
V71 Percent of population in high school
V72 Percent of population in college
V73 Percent of urbanization
V74 Food production per capita
V75 Long term debt
V76 Debt service
V77 Infant mortality

*V64-V77 were compiled from 1989 World Bank data

APPENDIX B

Frequency distribution - News Type

Newstype	Frequency	Percent*	Mean	Median	Mode
Spot (1)	176	32.3	1.67	2.00	2.00
Feature (2)	368	67.7	Std Deviation		
			.458		

Frequency distribution - News Topics (collapsed into soft/hard)

News topic	Frequency	Percent*	Mean	Median	Mode
Hard (1)	255	47.9	1.67	2.00	2.00
Soft (2)	283	52.1			

Frequency distribution - Gender of reporter

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Median	Mode
Male (1)	324	59.5	1.8	1.00	1.00
Female (3)	220	40.5	Std Deviation		
			.981		

*Valid percent of total cases coded. Excludes missing cases or miscoding.

Frequency distribution - GNP

GNP	Frequency	Percent
120	6	1.5
129	1	.3
210	1	.3
330	8	2.1
340	3	.8
380	1	.3
400	6	1.5
420	9	2.3
430	2	.5
440	4	1.0
570	3	.8
630	10	2.6
636	1	.3
650	5	1.3
660	6	1.5
900	2	.5
940	8	2.1
1010	5	1.3
1120	1	.3
1180	9	2.3
1230	1	.3
1280	6	1.5
1500	4	1.0
1680	1	.3
1690	2	.5
1760	3	.8
1860	12	3.1
1940	1	.3
2160	6	1.5
2290	24	6.2
2460	11	2.8
2470	2	.5
2520	18	4.6
2620	2	.5
2630	3	.8
3250	4	1.0
3650	4	1.0
4450	1	.3
4800	3	.8
6010	1	.3
6260	8	2.1
6340	2	.5
6430	1	.3
7740	13	3.3
7750	9	2.3
8650	2	.5
9070	10	2.6
9200	4	1.0
9930	1	.3
10700	2	.5
12340	12	3.1

Mean	Median	Mode
3297	3650	2290

Std Deviation
3074

GNP	Frequency	Percent
12810	13	3.3
13330	2	.5
13400	7	1.8
14490	2	.4
15770	7	1.8
16960	9	2.3
16961	2	.5
18450	5	1.3
18480	15	3.9
18590	9	2.3
19300	3	.8
19840	15	3.9
20190	6	1.5
21010	1	.3
21020	15	3.9
27500	14	3.6

APPENDIX C

Frequency of Primary Story Topics

Diplomatic/politic	53
Internal conflict	41
Human interest	34
Archaeology	33
Elections	32
Environment	27
Arts	27
Crafts/culture	26
Scientific	23
Other political	22
Other trade	15
Other entertainm	13
Religion	12
Tourism	10
Non-pol crime	10
Social problems	10
Armed conflict	10
Peace moves	10
Other/armsdeals	9
Other social svcs	8
Migration	8
Sports	7
Education	7
Capital invest	7
Other economic	6
Disaster relief	7
Industry	7
Other economic	6
Other crime/law	6
Agriculture	6
Political crime	5
M communication	5
Drugs	5
Human rights	5
Health	4
International	4
Entertainment	4
Other aid	4
Women's issues	4
Trade agreemts	2
Monetary	2
Entertainers	2
Prices/living	2
Labour rel	2
Non-intl	1
Economic aid	1
Stock exchange	1
Non-crime legal	1
Family planning	0
Military aid	0
MISSING CASES	1
TOTAL CODED	546

REFERENCES

Arizpe, L. (1977). Women in the informal labor sector: The case of Mexico city. In Wellesley Editorial Committee (Eds.), *Women and national development: The complexities of change* (pp. 25-37). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bossen, L. (1975). Women in modernizing societies. *American Ethnologist, 2* (4), 587-601.

Dilawari, S., Stewart, R. & Flourney, D. (1990). *Development news on CNN World Report.* Paper submitted to the International Division of the Association of Educators of Journalism and Mass Communications.

Gallagher, M. (1981). *Unequal Opportunities: The case of women and the media.* Paris: UNESCO.

Hanson, L. (1991, April). *Images of women in the CNN World Report*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Broadcast Education Association, Las Vegas, NE.

Jelin, E. (1977). Migration and labor force participation of Latin American women: The domestic servants in the cities. In Wellesley Editorial Committee (Eds.), *Women and national development: The complexities of change* (pp. 129-141). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Krimsky, G. (1990, Fall). Third world press. *Gannett Center Journal*, 61-71.

Lerner, D. (1958). *The Passing of Traditional Society.* New York: Macmillan.

Marshall, S. (1985). Development, dependence, and gender inequality in the Third World. *International Studies Quarterly,29*, 217-240.

Mathieu, N. (1988). "Woman" in ethnology: The other of the other, and the other of the self. *Feminist Studies, 14* (1), 3-14.

Park, H. (1991). *Toward a comprehensive understanding of third world culture: A suggestion for future research*. Paper presented at the meeting of the International Communication Association, Chicago, IL.

Pye, L. (1963). *Communication and Political Development*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rush, R. & Ogan C. (1989). Communication and development: The female connection. In R.Rush and D. Allen (Eds.), *Communications at the crossroads: The gender gap connection*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Safilios-Rothschild, C. (1982a). A class and sex stratification model and its relevance for fertility trends in the developing world. In C. Hohn and R. Mackensen (Eds.) Determinants of fertility trends: Theories re-examined. Liege, Belgium: Ordina Editions.

___________ . (1982b). Female power, autonomy and demographic change in the Third World. In Anker, R. (Ed.) Women's roles and population trends in the Third World. pp. 117-132.

___________ . (1985). Socioeconomic development and the status of women in the Third World. New York: The Population Council.

Schramm, W. (1964). Mass media and national development. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Sreberny-Mohammadi, A., et al., eds. (1985). Foreign news in media: International reporting in 29 countries: Reports and Papers on Mass Communication. No. 93. Paris: UNESCO.

Steeves, L. (1989). Gender and communication in global context. In Pamela Creedon (Ed.), Women in Mass Communication. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. 83-111.

Theobald, R. (1980). The Communications Era from the year 2000. National Forum, 60(3), 17-20.

UNESCO. (1985). Communication in the service of women: A report on action and research programmes, 1980-1985. Paris: UNESCO.

Van Allen, J. (1976). African Women, "modernization," and national liberation. In L.B. Iglitzin and R. Ross (Eds.), Women in the world: A comparative study (pp. 25054). Santa Barbara, CA: Clio.

Valdivia, A. (1991, May). Is there room for women in traditional news? Paper presented at the meeting of the International Communication Association, Chicago, IL.

Youssef, N. (1974). Women and work in developing societies. Population Monography Series No. 15. Berkeley, CA: University of California Institute of International Studies.

U.S. NEWSMAGAZINES COVER THE ETHIOPIAN FAMINE, 1983-86

Andrea Gary, M.S.J.

Anne Cooper, Ph.D.

E.W. Scripps School of Journalism

Ohio University

Athens, OH 45701

(614) 593-6728

ABSTRACT

Newsweek, Time and US News and World Report serve as the prime national print sources of foreign news in the United States. This study looked at a rare African story that newsmagazines covered extensively. It found that duration of coverage fell far short of the famine's actual duration. Western relief efforts were covered extensively, especially the Live Aid concert (but not the British Band Aid effort), while photographs focused on starving African children. Of 25 topics, Ethiopia's Marxism was the one most frequently mentioned, with references to the Ethiopian government being uniformly negative. In those last days of the Cold War, coverage seemed to support U.S. foreign policy, as previous research has suggested foreign reporting tends to do.

Presented to the Magazine Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Annual Convention, Boston

August 7-11, 1991

Note: Please send all correspondence to second author.

U.S. NEWSMAGAZINES COVER THE ETHIOPIAN FAMINE, 1983-86

> The press. . . is like the beam of a searchlight that moves restlessly about, bringing one episode and then another out of the darkness and into vision (Lippmann 1922, p. 364).

I. INTRODUCTION

The endemic problem of famine in Africa, particularly Ethiopia, galvanized the world's attention in the fall of 1984. On Oct. 19, Michael Buerk of the BBC, along with a BBC cameraman and VISNEWS' African bureau chief Mohammed Amin, entered Tigre province in northern Ethiopia. Buerk's report aired Oct. 23.

Both NBC's London bureau chief and its European news manager, after viewing the footage, "begged passionately" enough that NBC New York agreed to accept it by satellite. Once the tape began rolling, there was "dead silence in the newsroom...a realization it was a story of enormous magnitude and needed to be on the air" (Lavery 1986). It ran that night, precipitating saturation coverage of the famine and ensuing relief effort.

On July 13, 1985, an all-day music telethon, Live Aid, raised more than $70 million. Proceeds from the sales of two pop songs combined collected $56 million. U.S. President Ronald Reagan asked Congress to appropriate $1 billion for Africa (Orlofsky 1986, p. 530). But the unique response in 1984-85 did not reflect a unique need.

Ethiopia, particularly in the northern provinces of Tigre, north Shoa, and Begemder, and in the Rift area (see Figure 1), had experienced famines prior to 1984 (see Appendix). In a report released March 28, 1991, the UN's Food and Agricultural

Organization said that Ethiopia and five other African nations faced famines in the near future. In May 1991, as rebels closed in on Addis Ababa, civil war exacerbated an already serious hunger problem.

A video documentary (Lavery 1986) and dissertation (Ajouma 1987) have explored the networks' coverage of the mid-1980s famine, but they represent only part of this country's national media system. The three newsmagazines deserve attention as well.

The Three News Weeklies

Newsweek, Time, and U.S. News and World Report play a crucial role as widely read sources of international news, with their weekly combined circulation of more than 10 million. To gather this information, Newsweek has 16 overseas bureaus; Time, 21; and U.S. News and World Report (called hereafter USNWR), seven, along with 14 additional correspondents.

By contrast, the New York Times with 32 foreign correspondents (26 bureaus), the Los Angeles Times with 25 correspondents, and the Washington Post with 22 correspondents (Emery 1989, p. 158) all have local constituencies. As daily publications "of record" that can run to hundreds of pages, they do not serve the same highlighting function as do the news weeklies. Nor do they reach as many people. The New York Times has a circulation of 1,056,924, compared to these 1990 ABC paid circulation figures for the newsmagazines:

Newsweek	3,288,453
Time	4,393,237
USNWR	2,303,328

Readership is about seven times greater than circulation. According to a Newsweek fact sheet, total adult readership for a rate base of 3,050,000 was more than 20 million in 1987.

A 1985 Gallup survey found that 86 percent of respondents had a "mostly favorable" or "very favorable" overall opinion of newsmagazines (Times Mirror 1986). The same study discovered that 85 percent of respondents rated Time as highly believable, while 86 percent rated Newsweek as highly believable (USNWR was not included in the survey by name).

Advertiser confidence in the newsmagazines parallels reader confidence. In 1987, all had more than $100 million in gross advertising revenues, with Time ranking second among all consumer magazines; Newsweek, fifth; and USNWR, 15th (Baird 1990, p. 11).

Purpose of Study

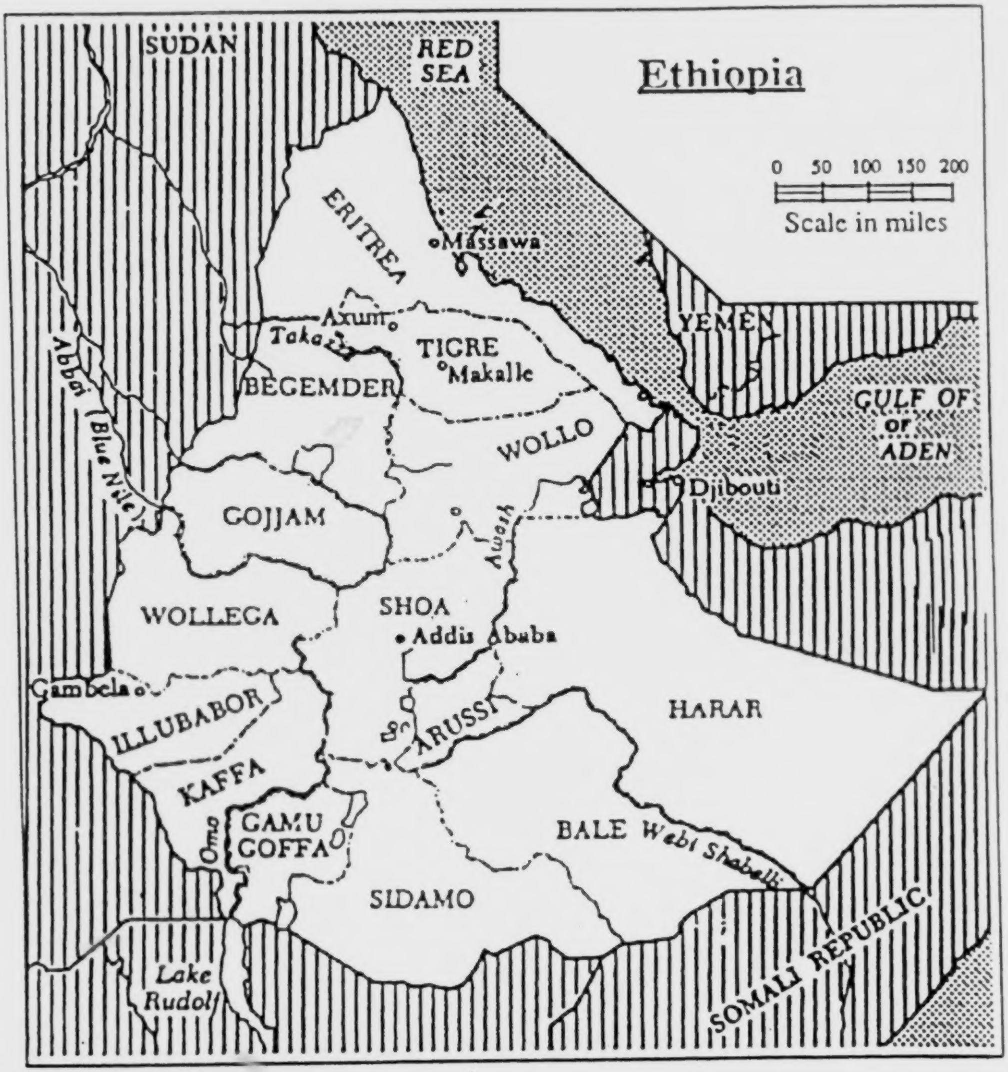
Most Third World events do not make news in mainstream U.S. media (Cooper 1984), leaving us with the frustration of nothing to study. Thus an examination of one Third World crisis that did make news can be instructive. This study aims to discover what newsmagazines presented--and did not present--to the American public about the mid-1980s famine in Ethiopia, thereby shedding light on the gatekeeping process.

We already know how and when the heightened media attention originated: from a TV broadcast Oct. 23, 1984. And we know that, probably as a result of this media coverage, private and government assistance ballooned. But what was the nature of the coverage that produced such a measurable public response?

Rosengren (1974) emphasized the importance of a real-world referent--a "universe of events"--in assessing media content. By using sources other than the newsmagazines, one can construct a standard against which to judge coverage, revealing what magazines excluded as well as what they included.

Considering the tremendous reach of the newsmagazines, it is surprising how little their foreign coverage has been studied. And no research to date has applied the inclusion/exclusion approach to news weeklies' African coverage.

Fig. 1: Provinces of Ethiopia


SUDAN
RED SEA
Ethiopia
0 50 100 150 200
Scale in miles
ERITREA
Massawa
Axum
Takazze
TIGRE
Makalle
BEGEMDER
Abbai (Blue Nile)
WOLLO
YEMEN
GULF OF ADEN
Djibouti
GOJJAM
Awash
SHOA
Addis Ababa
WOLLEGA
Gambela
ILLUBABOR
ARUSSI
HARAR
KAFFA
GAMU GOFFA
BALE
Webi Shabelli
SIDAMO
SOMALI REPUBLIC
Lake Rudolf

II. RELATED STUDIES

Both journalists and researchers share concern about the quality and quantity of foreign news, especially from the Third World. Associated Press correspondent Mort Rosenblum (1979, p. 203, 205) described coverage of the developing world as "ill-informed and superficial," with the Western press making little effort to dispel "distorted stereotypes about remote cultures." Foreign correspondents tend to travel in packs, according to Rosenblum (1979), which creates a heavy flow of information on one story, while others remain unnoticed.

According to Time magazine columnist Thomas Griffith (1978, p. 102), Western media editors "assume that Americans are weary of unsolvable problems in unpronouncable places. The foreign correspondent is now an endangered species."

Foreign Coverage by U.S. Print Media

Does ethnocentrism color reporting and decision-making? Robinson (1970) and Bailey and Lichty (1972) indicated that foreign correspondents, editors, and all others within the media system are part of a trained and socialized subculture who make decisions based on their backgrounds. Gans (1970, p. 35) notes that journalists can never be "truly detached outsiders" as they are generally a part of middle-class America and accept and judge others by the dominant values and economic and social cultures of their society. Furthermore, foreign news, particularly events in the Communist world, is often treated with value judgments that would not be acceptable for domestic reporting (Gans 1980, p. 37).

The average reader combines physical distance with psychological distance, according to Maclean and Pinna (1958), and therefore is less interested in choosing media with content from faraway places. The closer to home and more familiar the area, the more interest the reader will develop. Sparkes and Winter (1980) also found that international, political, and economic articles written from a U.S. viewpoint will receive more American readership than stories solely on a foreign nation's politics and economics.

Gatekeepers may not even be aware of what influences their inclusion/ exclusion of foreign news. Hester (1973) related coverage of the nations of the world to a hierarchical "pecking order" based on economic strength and political power. Chang, Shoemaker, and Brendlinger (1987) listed three additional variables they found to influence whether an international event is considered newsworthy by the American media -- relevance to the U.S., potential for social change, and the normative deviance of the event.

Foreign Coverage by U.S. Print Media

Emery's 1989 (p. 154) study of 10 leading American newspapers found a consistently "shrinking international newshole." Comparing non-advertising space in the newspapers in his sample, he discovered that in 1971, 10.2 percent of the space was devoted to foreign news, a figure that continually declined until it reached 2.6 percent in 1988.

Regarding Third World coverage, Semmel (1976) found that four elite U.S. dailies emphasized coverage of other developed nations (England, France, Japan, and the Soviet Union). Similarly, Potter's (1987) study of eight prestigious American newspapers found that 72.6 percent of front page international news focused on industrialized, developed nations, while only 7.5 percent featured Third World countries. He also reported that during the four years he studied, a negative relationship existed between the proportion of space allocated to international news and the volume of Third World coverage. The larger the news hole, he discovered, the smaller the proportion of coverage.

According to Sreberny-Mohammadi et al (1985), frequently Third World reporting focuses on an incident or event, creating a high level of reporting (or hot coverage) during the incident, then a tapering-off of reporting (cold coverage) when the event draws to a close. Hester (1973, p. 243) labels the hot/cold flow as "news storms" which occasionally occur amidst an overall consistent flow of news.

African Coverage by U.S. Print Media

Hachten (1971, p. 53) describes Africa as on the "lower fringe of the great East-West news flow patterns." Indeed, Kliesch's (1991) census of 3,260 journalists overseas found that only 5 percent were assigned to Africa, up slightly from 3 percent in 1975. Not surprisingly, little news from Africa finds its way to U.S. audiences.

In their "snapshot" study of U.S. dailies, Gerbner and Marvanyi (1977) found that the three African regions (north, central, and south) represented a total of 3.8 percent of the papers' coverage. Similarly, Haque's (1983) study of international coverage in three elite newspapers found that Africa received just 6.5 percent of the available space.

Within the continent, only a handful of nations get covered. In the six elite dailies that Koomson (1990) studied, during 1977-1988, just six nations received more than 5 percent of news items: Zimbabwe, 14.2 percent; Ethiopia, 8.1; Angola, 7.1; Kenya, 5.5; Uganda, 5.5; and Mozambique, 5.2. Wilhoit and Weaver (1983) found that AP's New York editors sent out on the regional wire news from only five Sub-Saharan Africa nations, even though reporters in the field had filed dispatches from nine countries. However, when a sample of Indiana editors chose what stories to actually run in their newspapers, only one country remained: South Africa. Nigeria, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe did not complete the final phase of the long journey through the news "funnel."

Newsmagazines' Foreign/ African Coverage

While some newsmagazine studies have looked at Vietnam (e.g., Herman and Brodhead 1986) and Nicaragua (e.g., O'Brien and Cooper 1990), few have dealt with Africa. Gary's (1990) study of U.S. newsmagazine coverage of Kenya before, during, and after the country's Mau Mau conflict found an increase of coverage during the incident, then a sharp decline in coverage once the conflict subsided. It also found patterns consistent with international reporting--fluctuating coverage, conflict stories, and projection of negative and barbaric images of Kenya and its people.

Earlier, Pratt's 1980 study of Africa coverage in six American magazines found more coverage of Africa in opinion magazines than in newsmagazines. He also reported that the newsmagazines (Newsweek, Time, and USNWR) together gave Africa the fifth highest amount of coverage out of 10 world regions. A study of photos in Time and Newsweek magazines confirmed the social propinquity theory by indicating factors like ethnocentricity as well as cultural, ideological, political, and economic similarities have a high correlation with news coverage (Tsang 1987).

Bledsoe et al (1983) studied foreign coverage in four mass periodicals (Newsweek, Time, Reader's Digest, and USN WR) and found the publications emphasized "action" regions such as Europe and the Middle East. When covering the Third World, the magazines tended to portray the regions as underdeveloped, "troubled" areas. Finally, Gans (1980), who was a participant observer at Newsweek and Time, believes that disasters make news, although the further from America the country is geographically, culturally, or racially, the larger the number of victims needed to attract Western attention.

Research Questions

This study can help fill a gap in the literature regarding U.S. newsmagazine coverage of Africa. It can also address a theoretical gap in understanding the gatekeeping process by using Rosengren's (1974) inclusion/exclusion content analysis approach. The study will explore these questions regarding coverage of Ethiopia during the mid-1980s by *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *USN'WR*:

1) *Duration and volume:* Did newsmagazine coverage predate the Ethiopia TV blitz that began Oct. 23, 1984? If so, did the prior coverage of Ethiopia relate to the famine? How and when did coverage decrease? How did the ebb and flow of coverage compare with the famine's actual duration?

2) *Textual content:* Did coverage focus on American interests in the famine issue--e.g., U.S. policy, American fundraising efforts, American celebrities? Or did the magazines also cover Ethiopian events, such as the Eritrean and Tigrean conflicts, and the Ethiopian military dictatorship? What patterns of inclusion/exclusion exist?

3) *Photographic content:* Did photographs feature American celebrities during fundraising efforts rather than issues pertaining directly to the events in Ethiopia? Of the Ethiopian scenes, did children predominate? How was starvation depicted?

III. METHOD

This study aims to discover what newsmagazines presented--and did not present--to the American public about the mid-1980s famine in Ethiopia. To create a context for the heavily covered period of 1984-85, the years 1983-86 were studied. Researchers located relevant articles in Newsweek, Time, and U.S. News & World Report (USNWR) using these headings from The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature: Africa, Band Aid, civil war, developing countries, drought, Eritrea, Ethiopia, famine, food supply, fundraising, Live Aid, refugees, relief, religion, and USA for Africa.

Textual content was defined as any complete article on Ethiopia, including famine background and relief efforts specifically for Ethiopia. Excluded were general articles on Africa or those mentioning Ethiopia briefly. However, if an article contained a specific section on Ethiopia, such as a story discussing the famine country by country, the Ethiopia copy alone was included.

Because the Reader's Guide does not index newsbriefs (e.g., "Worldgram" in USNWR), the researchers excluded them. The placement of articles was not studied because most foreign copy is located in "international" sections.

To find volume, articles were measured in square inches (column width multiplied by column length). The standard column width in all three magazines was 2 1/4 inches (35 of the 45 articles studied). The remaining articles' widths ranged from 1 inch to 3 1/4 inches. Each publication used 9-point type and similar typefaces.

Content Categories: Text

Researchers created a 25-category "universe of events" (Rosengren 1974) as a standard against which to judge included and excluded information. The 25 categories represented events that occurred in Ethiopia 1983-86 as listed in Facts on File.

The unit of analysis was the individual paragraph. If a paragraph referred to two or more separate categories, each mention was tabulated. This method precisely captured the information presented to readers, rather than forcing a complex article into one overgeneral category.

When a topic was mentioned more than one time in a single paragraph, the coder indicated one mention on the coding sheet. Only four paragraphs fell outside the 25 categories; these paragraphs were included in the total volume count but with no mentions indicated on the coding sheets.

The "universe" of topics is as follows:

1) Band Aid relief efforts: anything about the British musicians and their song "Do They Know it's Christmas?" to raise money for relief efforts.

2) USA for Africa relief efforts: anything about the American musicians and their song "We Are The World" to raise money for relief efforts; includes the simultaneous broadcast of the song on American radio.

3) Live Aid concert: anything about the Live Aid concert, its organizers, performers, and funds raised.

4) Miscellaneous celebrity relief efforts: efforts by

those celebrities not involved in Band Aid, USA for Africa, or Live Aid.

5) "Average Joe" relief efforts: anything about efforts to raise money by people not considered celebrities; includes individuals and organizations.

6) Relief services fraud: anything about fraud stealing funds, misappropriation of money, etc.) among groups trying to raise money (e.g. the Catholic Relief Services).

7) Poor distribution of food and supplies: involves an inability to properly distribute food and supplies to famine victims because of disabled or lack of vehicles, poor distribution, mismanagement by administrators, and bad roads.

8) Airlift of Jewish Falashas: anything about Israel's airlift of Ethiopian Jews (called Falashas) to Israel; includes U.S. support, American Jewish interests in the airlift, and the new life of the Falashas in Israel.

9) Rebel conflict: anything mentioning "rebel conflict" inEthiopia, but not stating names of the specific rebel factions.

10) Communist/Marxist association in Ethiopia: any mention of the Soviet Union, Cuba, any Communist/Marxist practices, theories, policies, or parties in Ethiopia.

11) Refugees in or leaving Ethiopia: includes anything about people leaving Ethiopia or wandering from camp to camp in Ethiopia as victims of famine and war.

12) Villagization or forced resettlement: involves two related policies by the Ethiopian government: 1) the planning of villages to be established in areas distant from famine regions; and 2) the forcing of people by the government to move and live in designated villages in southern Ethiopia.

13) U.S. Government relief efforts: anything about money, equipment, food, supplies, medical aid, and people offered to Ethiopia by the U.S. government; includes efforts made by the President, Congress, and the military.

14) International relief efforts: relief efforts by countries other than the United States (has its own category) and the Soviet Union (is considered Ethiopia's ally and included in the Communist involvement category).

15) Ethiopian government/troops interfering with relief efforts: anything about interference with the distribution of food to famine victims by the Ethiopian government or its

troops. This includes blockage of ports, stealing food for military use, and not allowing relief workers/vehicles to famine and rebel-held territory.

16) Poor management by Ethiopia: anything about mismanagement of the government by state leaders, including the $200 million party celebrating the 10th anniversary of the country's revolution.

17) Eritrean conflict: anything about the war between secessionist Eritreans and the Ethiopian government; includes troop and rebel activity.

18) Tigrean conflict: anything about the fighting between the Tigreans and the Ethiopian government.

19) Ethiopian government/troop violence: anything about non-rebel troop violence against the Ethiopian people (i.e.troops demolishing refugee camps).

20) Ethiopian government official statements: use of official statements by Ethiopian government or military leaders.

21) Death/starvation statistics; drought/famine reports: any statistical reference to the number of deaths,starving people, homeless, refugees, etc., existing in Ethiopia. Also includes information on the condition of the land and famine statistics (i.e. food needed, food available).

22) Illustrative/descriptive text: and descriptions of living conditions and other famine situations in Ethiopia.

23) United Nations involvement in Ethiopia: any issue involving the UN and its interactions with Ethiopia.

24) U.S. politicians in Ethiopia: any reference to American politicians visiting famine regions in Ethiopia.

25) Events in Sudan: anything about situations in Sudan or involving Sudan which relate to Ethiopia and its famine.

Content Categories: Photographs

Photographs were measured in square inches. Captions gave information helpful in coding but were not measured, so that volume tallies would represent impact of visual im ages only. The

18 coding categories were developed following a preliminary survey of the photographs in the sample. The first 10 textual content categories above were applicable to photographs as well. In addition, eight categories addressed photographs specifically:

11) Starvation--children: pictures of children suffering from the famine; includes children with their parents.

12) Starvation--general: pictures of the famine (not shots of children) including group shots and refugee activity.

13) Death--children: pictures of children who have died as a result of the famine; includes parents with their dead children.

14) Death--general: pictures signifying death (excluding shots of children) as a result of the famine.

15) Drought scenes: any pictures illustrating the condition of the land in Ethiopia.

16) Mengistu photographs: any photos of the Ethiopian military dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam

17) Maps: any geographical map identifying Ethiopia.

18) Miscellaneous: any other photos.

Coder Reliability

Six randomly selected articles (two from each magazine) were coded by 16 undergraduates. Coders, who were given background on the famine crisis and an explanation for each category, reached a .9715 agreement level. Based on Scott's pi (Stempel 1989, p. 148), intercoder reliability ranged from .96 to .9865. The first author performed the actual coding.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In four years, the newsmagazines offered 38 stories and 102 photographs on Ethiopia. The research questions did not address differences among the newsmagazines, but for the reader's benefit, the discussion below will present separate results for each publication.

Duration and Volume of Textual Content

Prior to NBC's Oct. 23, 1984, broadcast of the segment that Tom Brokaw called "The Faces of Death," American newsmagazines exposed their audiences to virtually no information on Ethiopia. Time magazine alone focused on Ethiopia before that date by printing a 10-paragraph article on communism in July 1983 (see Figure 2), amounting to 50 square inches (see Figure 3).

After Oct. 24, Americans were suddenly inundated with information on the famine. Newsweek had articles in six of its nine remaining 1984 issues, while Time and USNWR both covered the crisis in three of those nine issues. All three newsmagazines continued with follow-up coverage in 1985. Figures 2 and 3 show that Time took the lead in covering Ethiopia with 10 articles (506.5 inches), compared with Newsweek's eight articles (342 inches) and USNWR's five articles (254.6 inches).

In 1985, all three magazines' coverage peaked between July 13 and July 29, 1985, coinciding with the Live Aid concert; in the five months following Live Aid, the three presented less material than in the prior six months, January-June. Then in 1986, Ethiopia all but disappeared as a story, with Newsweek and USNWR not offering any coverage whatsoever.

Of course the famine did not end as precipitously as the coverage. Readers realized this in August 1989 when Rep. Mickey Leland and 15 others were killed in a plane crash in Ethiopia. Leland, head of the House Select Committee on Hunger, was making his sixth famine-related trip to Ethiopia and Sudan.

Textual Content Categories

The large number (25) of exclusive, specific categories removed subjectivity from the coding decisions. Table 1 presents the data for each of the categories, but arranges the 25 in larger units to enhance meaning.

All topics were touched on at least once by at least one magazine, but not all magazines mentioned all topics. The 436 total topic mentions represent fewer than 436 paragraphs, due to multiple coding of some paragraphs.

A. Relief Efforts: Relief efforts accounted for nearly 30 % of all topic mentions. The Live Aid concert coverage surpassed all relief effort subtopics with 37 mentions; 22 of those appeared in Newsweek, which amounted to 17.6 % of the magazine's coverage--its largest topic category. By contrast, all three magazines downplayed the British Band Aid efforts. Aid by the U.S. government and USA for Africa received 20 mentions each. "Average Joe" or non-celebrity relief efforts had 19 mentions. Only Newsweek revealed fraudulent practices by relief agencies

(with seven mentions.)

B. Ethiopians' Actions: Activities by Ethiopians (15 % of all mentions), primarily by the government, received about half the attention paid to relief activities. All magazines covered the plan to develop refugee communities in southern Ethiopian provinces (villagization/ forced resettlement), which the government said involved voluntary moves. This largest subtopic stands out prominently because of Time's emphasis (15 of the 20 mentions). All three magazines covered the subtopic of poor distribution (20 mentions) about equally. Although none of the magazines went into great detail regarding poor management (14 mentions), one instance all pointed out was the government's $200 million party planned in 1984 to celebrate th 10th anniveresary of the overthrow of the monarchy.

C. Communist/Marxist Involvement: This uncollapsed category had 65 total mentions, (14.9 % of the total), by far the most of any of the 25 single categories. USNWR with 22 mentions (24.2 % of its total) and Time with 32 mentions (14.5 %) ranked this topic the most prominent of the 25.

Mikhail Gorbachev had only assumed the role of general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party in March 1985, while the Ethiopia story peaked in July 1985, at the end of the Reagan Cold War period. A headline in USNWR on July 29, 1985, illustrates this Cold War "lens": "West's Aid Fails to Sway Ethiopia From East's Orbit; Its people are dying by the tens of thousands, yet the Marxist regime prefers Soviet guns over food donated by the U.S."

D. Conflicts--Rebel, Eritrean, and Tigrean: *Time* surpassed the other media in its coverage of the Eritrean (22 mentions) and Tigrean (12 mentions) peoples' conflict with the Ethiopian government. Conflict coverage by *Newsweek* (seven mentions) and *USNWR* (nine mentions) was less extensive.

E. Death Statistics/Drought Reports: The magazines wove numbers into paragraphs that also mentioned other topics, e.g. "starvation that has claimed at least 300,000 lives" (*Newsweek*, Dec. 24, 1984), or "Last year's precipitation was the lowest in 70 years..." (*Newsweek*, Nov. 26, 1984). Death statistics and drought reports received 42 total mentions (9.6 % of the total mentions).

F. Illustrative/Descriptive Text: Descriptive passages such as these, not using numbers, also frequently appeared in reports by all magazines: "There were half-starved children with protruding bones and staring eyes among them" (*Newsweek*, Jan. 14, 1985); "dusty columns of lame, gaunt Africans trudged through the bush, some of them already blinded by malnutrition and clinging to their neighbors " (*Newsweek*, Nov. 26, 1984); and "under a lone acacia tree, the funeral of a young cholera victim takes place while vultures circle above and another funeral party waits its turn" (*USNWR*, July 29, 1985).

G. Other : The remaining 8.5 % of mentions included the subtopic of the Israeli and U.S. airlift of Ethiopian Jews (Falashas), an event not covered at all by USNWR. Time (with 11 mentions) offered the most reports on the airlift as well as providing a follow-up report on the condition of the Falashas once they reached Israel. In addition, Time was the only newsmagazine to use a Falasha as a source in its reporting.

Photographic Content

A total of 102 photographs (including maps) from Newsweek, Time, and USNWR were evaluated based on 18 topic categories for this study (see Table 2). Overall, Time's photographs covered 14 of the 17 categories; Newsweek's, 12; and USNWR's, eight. Only Newsweek used a famine photo on its cover (see Figure 4).

Photo coverage followed the same ebb and flow pattern found in the text volume analysis. In 1983, 15 square inches appeared in the three magazines combined, the figure rose to 517 inches in 1984, increased to 846 in 1985, then fell to 115 in 1986 (see Figure 5).

Relief Efforts: Of the 18 categories, and similar to the text categories, a large number of categories (five) related to relief efforts (see Table 2). Live Aid photos appeared more often in number with 20 total shots, although a majority (14) of the photos appeared in Newsweek alone. Time ran the remaining six Live Aid photos, and USNWR did not provide photo coverage of the concert or any other relief-related topic. Band Aid was the single category of the 18 categories to be ignored by all three publications. In addition, shots of the celebrities involved in the relief efforts garnered more photo space in both *Newsweek* and *Time* than did "Average Joe's" fundraising efforts. The total of the five relief categories produced a high number of photographs (31) but only 382 square inches (294 inches of which were Live Aid coverage).

Starvation/Death -- children and general photographs: Barely beating Live Aid's photo space were photographs of starving children. Although Live Aid and the starving children shots were close in terms of their number of square inches, the photos of the children tended to be larger (averaging 20.4 square inches) than the Live Aid pictures (averaging 14.7 square inches), of which a majority were small shots of celebrities. Apparently the editors felt that large illustrations of the tragedy in Ethiopia, especially pictures involving children, would create a strong impact on their readers. The magazines together ran a total of 28 starvation photos and eight pictures of death scenes (seven of which depict children), which equalled 641 square inches.

Drought scene/food distribution: Only one magazine, *Newsweek*, focused its lenses on the ravaged countryside. All three publications included shots of the food distribution process, either trucks and planes delivering food or people reaching toward someone who was passing out food.

Other: *Time* offered a relatively large amount of attention to the country's civil conflicts by running 112 square inches

Table 1: Topic Mentions in Copy Coverage of Ethiopia, 1983-1986

	Newsweek	Time	U.S. News & World Report	Total mentions	% Total mentions
A. RELIEF EFFORTS					
Live Aid Concert	22	12	3	120	29.8%
U.S. Government Relief Efforts	4	8	8		
USA for Africa	5	14	1		
'Average Joe' Relief	9	3	7		
International Aid (not U.S. or U.S.S.R.)	3	6	3		
Band Aid	3	5	1		
Relief Services Fraud	7	0	0		
Misc. Celebrity Relief Efforts	1	4	1		
B. ETHIOPIANS' ACTIONS					
Villagization — Forced resettlement	3	15	2	67	15.4%
Poor Distribution	6	7	7		
Poor Management	8	3	3		
Ethiopian Gov't./ Troops Interfering	5	1	0		
Ethiopian Gov't. Violence	0	4	0		
Ethiopian Gov't. Official Statement	2	1	0		
C. Communist/Marxist Involvement	11	32	22	65	14.9%
D. CONFLICTS					
Eritrean Conflict	1	22	2	54	12.4%
Tigrean Conflict	3	12	2		
Rebel Conflict	3	4	5		
E. Death/Starvation stats. Famine reports	10	21	11	42	9.6%
F. Illustrative / Descriptive Text	10	23	8	41	9.4%
G. OTHER					
Airlift of Falashas	4	11	0	37	8.5%
Refugees leaving Ethiopia	3	6	2		
Events in Sudan	1	4	2		
U.S. Politicians in Africa	1	2	0		
UN Involvement in Ethiopia	0	0	1		
	125	220	91	436	100%

Table 2: Newsmagazine Photo Topics in the Coverage of Ethiopia, 1983-1986

	Newsweek		Time		U.S. News & World Report		Total no. of Photographs		Average Inches
	number	*inches*	*number*	*inches*	*number*	*inches*	*number*	*inches*	
Communist Involvement	0	0	3	66	1	29	4	95	23.8
Starvation — children	8	167	7	122	1	17	15	306	20.4
Starvation — general	3	92	5	88	5	36	13	216	16.6
Food Distribution	4	70	3	59	2	15	9	144	16.0
Death — general	0	0	1	16	0	0	1	16	16.0
Death — children	2	24	3	42	2	37	7	103	14.7
• Live Aid	14	191	6	103	0	0	20	294	14.7
Maps	1	30	2	18	1	9	4	57	14.3
Rebel Conflict	0	0	8	112	0	0	8	112	14.0
Falashas	1	11	1	12	0	0	2	23	11.5
• "Average Joe" Aid	3	25	1	12	0	0	4	37	9.3
• USA for Africa	1	12	5	38	0	0	6	50	8.3
Mengistu Photos	0	0	2	4	1	5	3	9	3.0
Drought Scene	1	5	0	0	0	0	1	5	5.0
• Relief Services Fraud	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1.0
• Band Aid	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Miscellaneous	0	0	2	17	1	8	3	25	8.3
Totals	39	628	49	709	14	156	102	1493	14.6
Average inches	16.1		14.5		11.1		14.6		

* RELIEF EFFORTS

Fig. 2: Total coverage of Ethiopia by newsmagazines, 1983-1986: articles

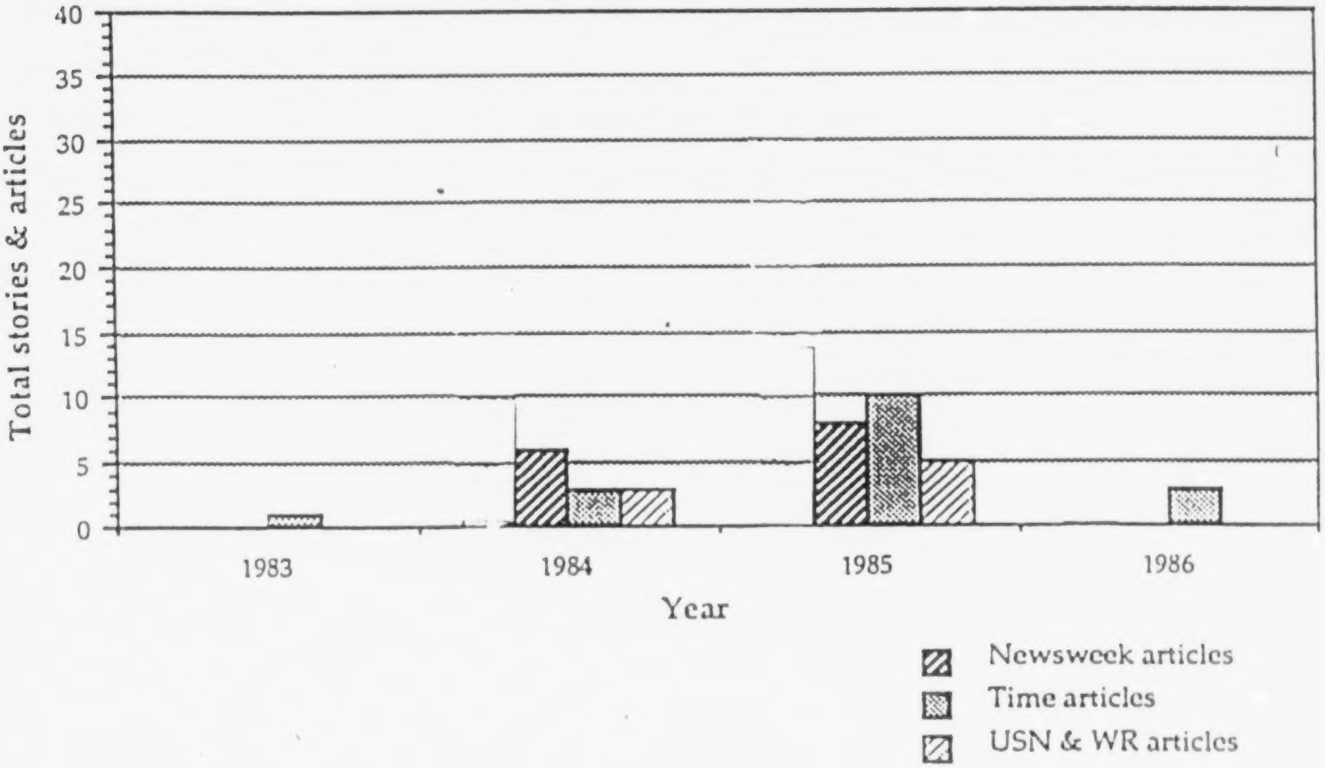


Fig. 3: Total coverage of Ethiopia by newsmagazines, 1983-1986: square inches

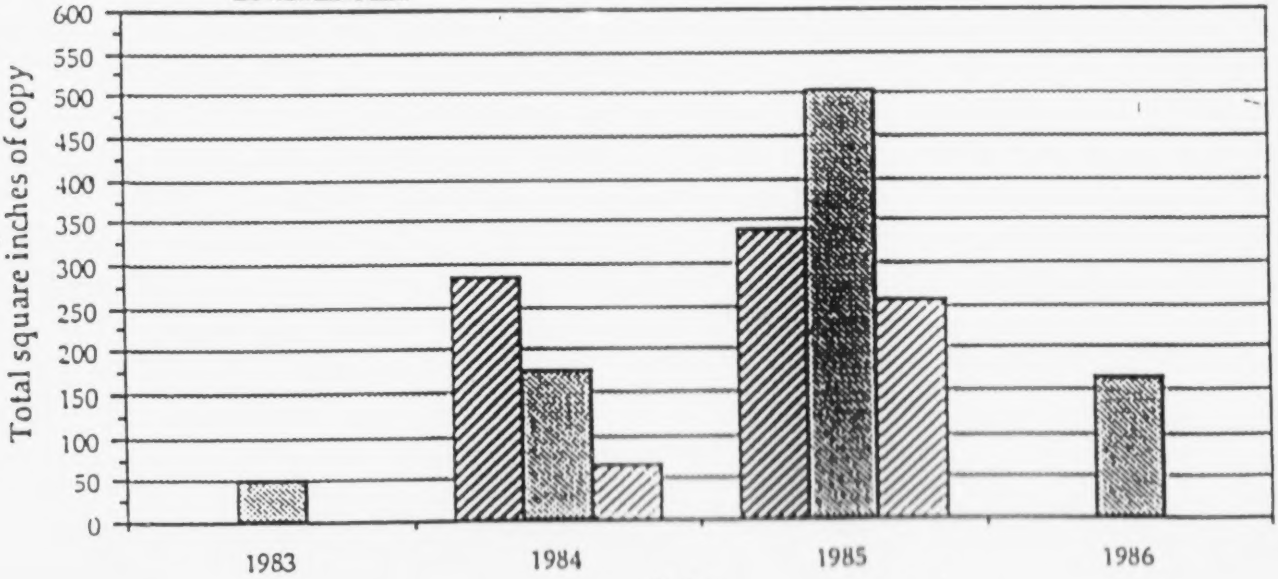
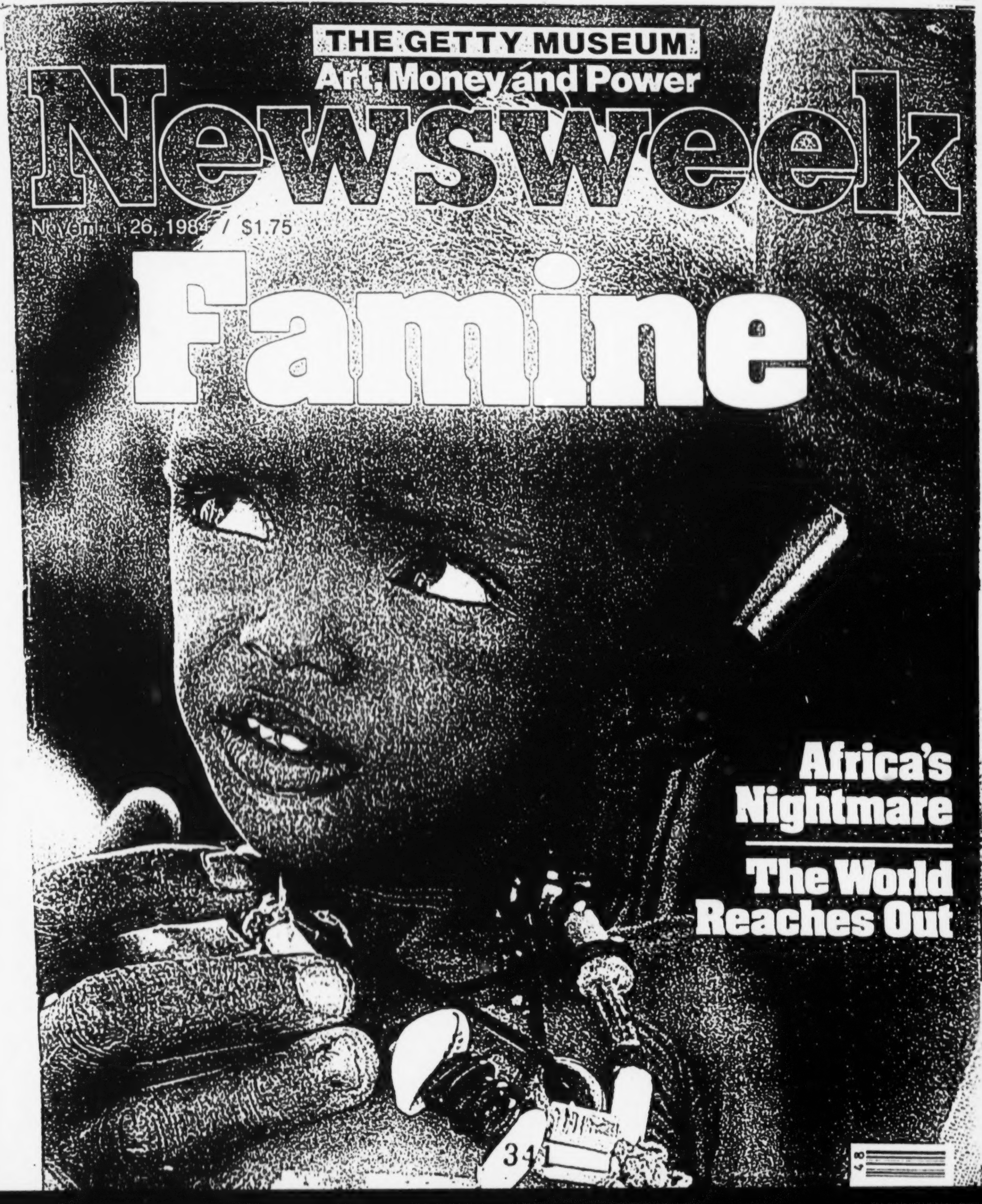


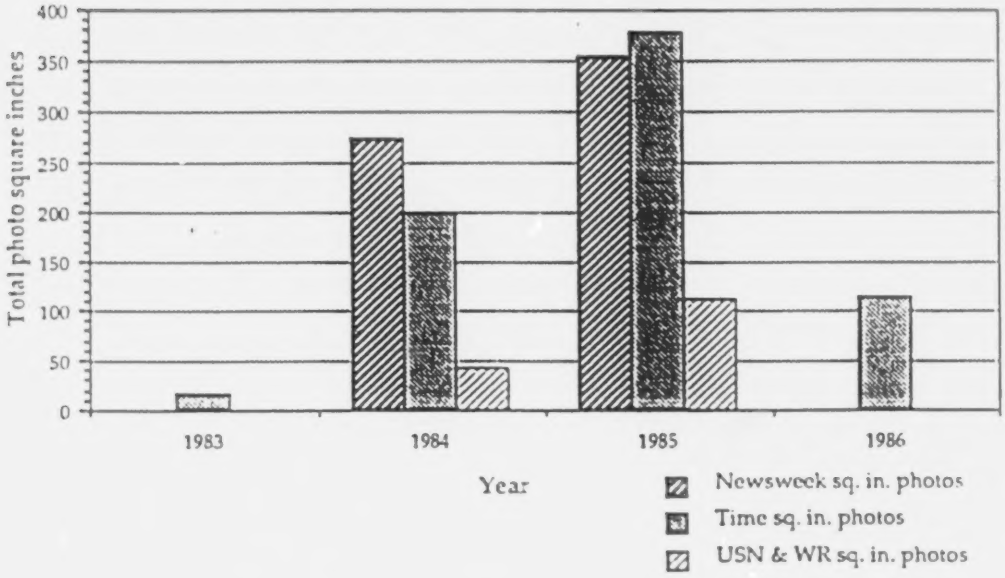
Figure 1. Cover of *Newsweek* for November 26, 1984


THE GETTY MUSEUM
Art, Money and Power
Newsweek
November 26, 1984 / $1.75
Famine
Africa's Nightmare
The World Reaches Out

featuring rebel factions. Newsweek and USNWR did not use photos of the rebels in their coverage. Regarding the airlift of Falashas, only USNWR did not provide photo coverage.

Maps of Ethiopia/Africa: All three magazines did include maps of Ethiopia for their readers, with Time producing two maps. However, only Newsweek provided a map of the entire African continent, while Time and USNWR ran maps of just the Horn area, identifying only Ethiopia and its neighbors.

Fig. 5: Volume of photographs of Ethiopia by newsmagazines, 1983-1986



V. CONCLUSIONS

In May 1991, as rebels moved closer to Addis Ababa, Americans probably thought more about Ethiopia than they had for the past five years. The fall of Mengitsu Haile Mariam, who fled to Zimbabwe, put Ethiopia back on the public's agenda, incidentally bringing news of "a new famine threatening 7 million people" (Newsweek, June 3, 1991, p. 34).

Did readers wonder how they missed the "end" of the "old" famine, if a new one loomed ahead? Especially in the case of foreign news, the media-dependent audience cannot know what it does not know. Few readers have enough foreign-affairs knowledge to complain, "My newsmagazine left out A,B, and C about Nations X,Y, and Z."

In fact the old famine grew somewhat less severe away from mass media's spotlight (the rains returned, but the fighting and resettlement created problems until Mariam's fall in 1991). The restless beam (Lippmann 1922, p. 364) had moved on to concerns such as AIDS, the war on drugs, the 1988 election and the Gulf war.

A famine is a situation, unlike the easy-to-cover rock music events staged for famine relief; a situation has no pre-scheduled dates, no press boxes and no celebrity stars. Moreover, a famine typically occurs in a Third World country away from airline routes and communication links. In short, the deck is stacked against an African disaster's news worthiness (e.g., Cooper

1984, Hacque 1983, Tsang 1987).

The Ethiopian famine made news almost by accident. A CBS report on Aug. 2, 1984, 12 weeks before the notable "Faces of Death" segment on NBC, elicited no public or media reaction--even though the famine had already been in progress more than a year. The "right" combination of circumstances converged in the dramatic Oct. 23 BBC report (Lavery 1986).

As Ajuonuma (1987, p. 118) learned during an interview with ABC's Vice-President George Watson, Ethiopia continued in the media spotlight because of the immediate public reaction. "Without any question the audience was there for that story and that encouraged continued coverage," said Watson.

This study does not stand as a neat affirmation of Rosengren's (1974) inclusion/exclusion approach, since among the three magazines, all 25 topics in the content "universe of events" were mentioned (see Table 1). Thus we cannot draw conclusions about patterns of excluded events. Rather, we can make five other observations.

1. The "universe" used in this study was somewhat circular, rather then being truly universal, constructed as it was mainly from news reports recorded in Facts on File. Conceivably, more categories could be added, some of which would be excluded, e.g., historical background on Ethiopia and accomplishments of Mengitsu or other officials.

2. The universe of photo topics, although also circular,

sheds more light on the gatekeeping process than the 436 text topic mentions. Because of space limitations, only 102--not 436--"include" decisions were made regarding photos. While texts mentioned the British Live Aid concert, no photos of it appeared in the three U.S. magazines. The local angle kept the story going longer than it would have without U.S. celebrities. Not even British celebrities had enough power to localize the far-off Ethiopians' sufferings.

3. The passage of time provides the most telling view of newsmagazines' gatekeeping in action. Figures 2,3 and 5 show a rise-fall pattern that peaked in July 1985, but the "universe of duration" (rather than the "universe of events") tells us that selection stopped, even though the situation continued. We suggest a new version of Rosengren's (1974) real-world referent: duration. How long will gatekeepers continue to cover an ongoing situation? In Ethiopia's case, not nearly as long as the famine lasted.

4. Inclusion/ exclusion analysis needs to be refined to a process of emphasis/ deemphasis analysis. Tables 1 and 2 show clumpings rather than omissions, e.g., Ethiopian government actions are included, but negatives are emphasized.

5. The specific emphasis on Marxism, the single most-mentioned topic,tells us something crucial about newsmagazines' foreign coverage. Since Ethiopia had the most committed Marxist-Leninist government in Africa (Bialer and Mandelbaum 1988, p.

136), this study seems to support Giffard's (1989) documentation and Gans' (1980, p. 37) assertion that news media "hew closer to the State Department line in foreign news" than to the White House line on domestic news. According to a Newsweek article on November 26, 1984, government officials labeled starving children in Ethiopia as "little commies." Ironically, this study of Third World coverage became a study of the influence of the Second World on journalism in the First World in the last stages of the Cold War.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. American newsmagazines do not represent the "Western press," so a similar study evaluating the coverage of Ethiopia by the press in a developed Western country less invovled in relief efforts could be done. For example, France did not have many stars involved directly in the relief efforts, so French press coverage might prove to be different than that of the U.S. media.

2. Rather than solely observing the published material regarding Ethiopia, studies need to seek out the gatekeepers of news to discover why typical patterns of Third World reporting continue, despite repeated criticisms of international coverage. Additionally, questions need to be raised as to why sources tend to be Western rather than nationals in international coverage.

3. A study of the visuals of the Ethiopian crisis and other Third World incidents as presented by the major television networks would could be done. Too often broadcast studies rely

solely on transcripts from the Vanderbilt University TV News Index and Abstracts. Combined with a study of magazine photographs, a visual TV study could reveal what kind of images of the peoples of Africa and the developing regions the media offer to Western audiences.

APPENDIX: ETHIOPIA--ITS HISTORY AND POLITICS

Ethiopians claim an old and rich history, with recorded civilization tracing back to the fourth century B.C. in the state of Aksum (or Axum). Located where the provinces of Eritrea and Tigre currently exist, Aksum is identified as being one of the oldest states in the world, and the earliest region to adopt a Christian religion.. Abyssinians, descendants of the Aksumites, used the religious foundations established by their predecessors to develop a literate culture and a feudal system of ruling. Ethiopia retained this feudal form of governance until its monarchy was overthrown and an independent republic proclaimed in 1974 (Rake 1985, p. 45).

For centuries, the Negus Negast, or "King of Kings," reigned over all of Ethiopia. The individual who occupied this position had to claim a Solomonic bloodline and be identified as a descendant of the biblical King Solomon and the mythical Makeda, Queen of Sheba. The Solomonic reign continued for centuries, and included Ethiopia's last emperor, Haile Sellassie I.

Following a coup against the reigning emperor in 1913, Haile Sellassie I, then known as Ras Tafari Makonnen (a "ras" being equivalent to a "duke"), was installed as regent to oversee administrative and diplomatic functions of the government (Hess 1970, pp. 62-64). Following the death of Empress Zwaditu in 1930, Ras Tafari assumed the role of emperor of Ethiopia under his baptismal name Haile Sellassie I, meaning "the power of the trinity." As a cousin of the deposed Emperor Lij Iasu, the new emperor possessed the requisite Solomonic bloodline (Marcus 1987, p. 3).

Ethiopia fell to the Italians in 1936. With the help of English troops, Ethiopia regained its independence in 1940.

In 1951, despite protests from independence-seeking Eritreans, the UN granted Ethiopia federation status including Eritrea (Hess 1970, pp. 68-70). Between 1952 and 1962, Ethiopia approached Eritrea as a subordinate, not a federated, territory (Rake 1985, pp. 41, 46). In 1962, Ethiopia annexed the region, declaring Eritrea as the nation's 13th province (Hess 1970, p. 72). As a result, hostile Eritreans organized the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) in 1961 and began battling Ethiopian government troops (Rake 1985, p. 47).

Between 1972 and 1974, an estimated 200,000 people starved during a famine in the Wollo province. In 1974, a series of civilian opposition strikes and demonstrations coincided with mutinies in the military ranks, eventually leading to the deposing of Haile Sellassie I on Sept. 12, 1974 (Hess 1970, p. 138) by Mengistu Haile Mariam, who himself fled the country in May 1991. By 1985, the combination of famine and continual warfare killed an estimated 300,000 people (Rake 1988, p. 115), and placed Ethiopia into international headlines.

REFERENCE LIST

Ajuonuma, L.C. 1987. U.S. television news coverage of a crisis in the Third World: the case of the Sub-Saharan hunger crisis. Unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota.

Bailey, G.A., and Lawrence W. Lichty. 1972. Rough justice on a Saigon street: a gatekeeper study of NBC's tet execution film. *Journalism Quarterly* 42: 221-229, 238.

Baird, Russell, and Click, W. 1990. *Magazine Editing and Production.* 5th ed. Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown.

Bialer, S. and M. Mandelbaum. 1988. *Global Rivals.* NY: Knopf.

Bledsoe, R.L., Roger Handberg, William Maddox, David Lenox, and Dennis A. Long. 1982. Foreign affairs coverage in elite and mass periodicals. *Journalism Quarterly* 59: 471-474.

Boyer, P.J. 1985. Famine in Ethiopia: the TV accident that exploded. *Washington Journalism Review* (January): 19-21.

Chang, T., Pamela J. Shoemaker, and Nancy Brendlinger. 1987. Determinants of international news coverage in the U.S. media. *Communication Research* 14: 396-412.

Charles, J., L. Shore and R. Todd. 1979. The *New York Times* coverage of equatorial and lower Africa. *Journal of Communication* 29: 148-155.

Cooper, A. 1984. Third World news on network television. Unpublished PH.D. diss. University of North Carolina.

Emery, M. 1989. An endangered species: the international newshole. *The Gannett Center Journal* (Fall): 151-166.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 1991. *The state of food and agriculture* . Rome.

Gans, Herbert. 1980. *Deciding what's news: a study of CBS, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time*. New York: Vintage.
-----. 1970 How well does TV present the news? *New York Times Magazine* Jan. 11, 31-45.

Gary, A. 1990. The 'hotspot' theory: measuring follow-up coverage of Kenya" E. W. Scripps School of Journalism, Ohio University. Typescript.

Gerbner, G., and George Marvanyi. 1977. The many worlds of the world's press. *Journal of Communication* 27: 52- 61.

Giffard, Anthony. 1989. *Unesco and the Media.* New York: Longman.

Griffith, T. 1978. "Overdosed on excitement." Time June, 1978, 102.

Hachten, W.A. 1971. Muffled drums. Ames, IA: the Iowa State University Press.

Haque, S.M.M. 1983. Is U.S. coverage of news in the Third World imbalanced? Journalism Quarterly 60: 521-524.

Herman, E., and F. Broadhead. 1984. Demonstration elections. Boston: South End Press.

Hess, R.L.1970. Ethiopia: the modernization of autocracy. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Hester, A. 1971. An analysis of news flow from developed and developing nations. Gazette 17: 29-43.
---1973. Theoretical considerations in predicting volume and direction in international information flow. Gazette 19: 241-245.

Kariel, H.G., and L. Rosenvall. 1983. Cultural affinity displayed in Canadian daily newspapers. Journalism Quarterly 60: 431-436.

Kliesch, R.E. 1975. A vanishing species: the American newsman abroad. The Overseas Press Club Directory: 18-19, 111.
---1991. The US press corps abroad rebounds: a seventh world survey of foreign correspondents. Newspaper Research Journal (winter): 24-33.

Koomson, Anthony. 1990. Coverage of sub-Saharan Africa by six elite U.S. newspapers. Unpublished Ph.D. diss., Ohio University.

Lavery, M. 1986. Consuming hunger part I -- getting the story. Produced by M. Lavery in association with Channel Four. Maryknoll World Tamouz Co. Videocassette.

Lippmann, W. 1922. Public Opinion. New York: Macmillan. (16th printing, 1961).

Maclean, M.S., and Luca Pinna. 1958. Distance and news interest: Scarperia, Italy. Journalism Quarterly 35: 36-48.

Marcus, H.G. 1987. Haile Sellassie I: the formative years, 1892-1936. Berkeley: University of California Press.

O'Brien, S. and A. Cooper. 1990. Newsmagazine coverage of the 1984 and 1990 Nicaraguan elections. Paper presented to the AEJMC annual convention, Minneapolis.

Ostgaard, E. 1965. Factors influencing the flow of news. Journal of Peace Research 12: 39-63.

Potter, W. J. 1987. News from three world in prestige U.S. newspapers. Journalism Quarterly 64: 73-79, 276.

Pratt, C.B. 1980. The reportage and images of Africa in six U.S. news and opinion magazines: a comparative study. Gazette: 26: 31-45.

Rake, A. 1985. The new African yearbook, 1984-1985. New York: Magazines Ltd.

---1988. The new African yearbook, 1987-1988. New York: Magazines Ltd.

Robinson, G.J. 1970. Foreign news selection is non-linear in Yugoslavia's Tanjug agency. Journalism Quarterly 47:340-351.

Rosenblum, Mort.1979. Coups and earthquakes: reporting the world for America. New York: Harper & Row.

Rosengren, Karl. 1974. International news: methods, data and theory. Journal of Peace Research 11: 145-156.

Semmel, A.K. 1976. Foreign news in four U.S. elite dailies: some comparisons. Journalism Quarterly 53: 732-736.

Skurnik, W.A.E. 1981. A new look at foreign news coverage: external dependence or national interests? African Studies Review 24: 99-109.

Sparkes, V.M., and James P. Winter. 1980. Public interest in foreign news. Gazette: 20: 149-168.

Sreberny-Mohammadi, A., Kaarle Nordenstreng, Robert Stevenson, and Frank Ugboajah. 1985. Foreign news in the media: international reporting in 29 countries. A final report for the International Association for Mass Communication Research for UNESCO. London.

Stempel, G.H. 1989. Statistical designs for content analysis. Edited by G. Stempel and B.H. Westley, Research methods in mass communication. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Times Mirror. 1986. The People and the Press. No place given: author.

Tsang, K. 1987. A theory of social propinquity: a general systems approach to international news research. Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin.

Wilhoit, G.C., and David Weaver. 1983. Foreign news coverage in two U.S. wire services: an update. Journal of Communication 33: 132-148.

Yu, C . 1990. The last days of the Eritrea war. In Insights 4 (summer) by Grassroots International.

Press Support for the U.S. Administration During Periods of External Conflict: A Test of Three Theories

Sonia Gutierrez-Villalobos, Ph.D. candidate
University of Massachusetts
Jim K. Hertog, Ph.D
Ramona R. Rush, Ph.D.
University of Kentucky

Address inquiries to:
Sonia Gutierrez-Villalobos
Department of Communication
University of Massachusetts
407 Machmer Hall
Amherst, MA 01002

Submitted to the International Communication Division,
AEJMC, Boston, August 1991.

A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the Intercultural and International Communication Conference, University of Miami, Miami,Fla., February 21-23, 1991.

ABSTRACT

Press Support for the U.S. Administration During Periods of External Conflict: A Test of Three Theories

Sonia Gutierrez-Villalobos, Ph.D. Candidate
Jim K. Hertog, Ph.D
Ramona R. Rush, Ph.D.

Address inquiries to:
Sonia Gutierrez-Villalobos
Department of Communication
University of Massachusetts
407 Machmer Hall
Amherst, MA 01002

This research tested the predictions made by three theories: Consensus, Pluralist and Dominance. Consensus theory predicts high support for every type of media during times of external conflict. Before and after the conflict they return to normal levels of support. Pluralist theory predicts that during the conflict the conservative media increase their support, the liberal media support moderately, and the radical increase their opposition. Before and after the conflict they return to their normal levels. Dominance theory predicts supportive coverage for the conservative and liberal media, oppositional coverage for the radical media, before, during and after the conflict.

A crucial distinction of these predictive models is Tactical and Strategic debate. Tactical debate accepts the underlying assumptions and beliefs that supports U.S. foreign policy. It criticizes the tactics to carry out the foreign policy, but not the policy itself. Strategic debate criticizes the belief that accepts national interest as justification for military and economic intervention.

The content categories are constructed from the scholarly debate about the invasion.

The 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama has been chosen as the conflict to test the theories. Three periodicals were selected for the analysis: Time, Newsweek and The Nation.

The findings demonstrate a constricted range of debate on the part of Time and Newsweek. Both have a significant pro-U.S. administration coverage: Tactical Support predominates in their news stories. Their patterns of coverage fit the predictions of Consensus model. The Nations coverage of the invasion is oppositional in both Tactical and Strategic. It fits the predictions of Pluralist and Dominance models.

Press Support for the U.S. Administration During Periods of External Conflict: A Test of Three Theories.

There are many studies and activities at the national and international levels about how the news from the Third World is reported by the media of the developed countries. The U.S. media can provide knowledge of the problems of the world and understanding among the countries, or can become more a forum for belief reinforcement and superstitious learning than an arena for constructive dialogue, critical insight, and creative action (Downing, 1988, p.28).

At the domestic level, press coverage of conflicts between the United States and other countries can, quite literally, be a life and death matter. Support for or opposition to policy, willingness to suppress information, and publicity or censorship of opposition to government policy can make a difference in government foreign policy decisions. The government may decide to engage in military versus diplomatic action, covert action versus economic aid, and so on, according to what kind of press the alternatives are getting.

If the press is biased itself in some way, policy outcomes are likely to be distorted. They will no longer represent the true interests of the entire population.

When studies are carried out on foreign affairs content, a crucial distinction concerning what bias represents must be made. In Tactical critiques, the underlying assumptions and beliefs supporting U.S. foreign policy are accepted, while the tactics of carrying them out are debated. Thus, while the assumptions that the U.S. has a right to, or even should, intervene in Latin America to protect its interests is not debated, the forms and occasions of intervention are. In strategic debate, the very belief system which accepts national interest as a justification for military and economic intervention in another country is debated. Often, researchers who look for Tactical critique of foreign policy in the media find quite a bit of it, while those who look for Strategic debate do not (Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Dorman, 1986; Hallin, 1985).

This research will study the coverage of conflict between the United States and Panama by Time, Newsweek, and The Nation. Three theories of the press and its relation to society will be developed. A review of previous research relating to this theories will be presented, and the theories will be tested according to their ability to predict patterns of domestic press coverage of conflict between the U.S. and other countries.

Three Theories of Society and the Press.

These three theoretical views will be called 1) Consensus theory; 2) Pluralist theory; and 3) Dominance theory. In order to avoid always having to attribute views and statements to a particular viewpoint and in order to present the arguments coherently, the discussion will speak from the view of each of the theories in turn, as though the authors were supporting first one and then another of the models. Statements made about the nature of the social system and its relation to the state and the press will illustrate the viewpoint ascribed to the theory being discussed.

Consensus theory.

Consensus theory emphasizes among members of social system rather than disagreement. All members of society share basic values, beliefs and emotional ties. What little conflict does occur within society stays within the bounds of the greater consensus, or general will. New members of the society are socialized to accept the norms and beliefs of the group and to value group membership above personal interest. Maintenance of social order in the face of forces tending to break it up is a crucial function of culture.

Government carries out the expression of the general will. Its function is to articulate the consensus in disputes among individuals and subgroups, and to bind the disputants to the values and norms of the community.

The press express the view of the consensus, and celebrates the ties among members of the society (Carey, 1975). Cerebration of tradition and cultural values is prominent in press content (Gans, 1980). Continual socialization of the young to the groups values and ongoing socialization of the group membership are important press functions. If the press were deviate too far from the values and norms of the society, social and economic pressure would be brought to bear. Both government and the press are subservient to the greater whole of the society.

Georg Simmel (1955), and later Lewis Coser (1956), discussed the effects of social conflict on groups. Although previous theory had stressed the negative effects of social conflict, Simmel argued that conflict could be functional for society. Especially important for this research Simmel, and later Coser, argued that external conflict or threat increases cohesiveness in the in-group. Thus, conflict between nations increases cohesion within those nations.

In the face of outside threat, dissent is less tolerated within the in-group. In the case of hostile foreign relations, tolerance for a diversity of viewpoints and disagreement within a country is reduced. Thus, press coverage in wartime will be restricted, and opponents to U.S. policy will not be allowed to present their views. The press will celebrate basic consensus views and will emphasize national symbolism. Censorship has been prevalent in the U.S. during wartime (Hallin, 1981; Hohenberg, 1973). Reviews of wartime coverage have shown an unwillingness to air anti-war views (Hallin, 1981; Knightley, 1982; Welch, 1972). Public opinion rallies around the flag when the U.S. engages in military confrontation with an outside power (Lowi, 1976). Congress also supports the president under these conditions (Stoll, 1987).

Hypotheses

Consensus model hypotheses concerning press critique of the Administration under different conditions are outlined below.

1. (a) Under normal conditions, press content concerning foreign powers and relations with them will carry a wide range of views as far as tactical discussion is concerned.

(b) Tactical critique of Administration actions will be plentiful, especially among press outlets which are considered ideologically opposed to the President. During the Reagan years, this includes the liberal press.

(c) Strategic critique will be less common.

2. (a) As conflict with an outside agent increases in

intensity, opposition to the Administration will decrease and support increase.

(b) Strategic Opposition especially will become rare and Strategic Support common.

(c) The most dramatic change will occur among the Opposition (liberal) press.

3. As the crisis subsides, the content will return to its Pre-Crisis state.

Pluralist Theory

Pluralist theory states that power and privilege in society are widely dispersed. As conflicts over the disposition of social resources occur, people form into groups to represent their interests (Truman, 1951).

Sometimes a particular group wins and sometimes loses, but no one group continually gains the upper hand and can impress its will on the rest of society. The many interests each individual has will lead him or her to join into many issue groups. These groups may even have contradictory goals. The clash in the public arena leads to an accommodation of outcomes which is very close to a reflection of the structure of interests for the entire population.

Government provides an arena of struggle and compromise for the conflicting groups, and binds the combatants to official sanctioned outcomes. As conditions change, the arena remains open and the struggle continues. New outcomes continually adjust the dispersion of social values in society.

According to Pluralist theory, the press provides a forum for the articulation of interests and sharpening of debate. It is relatively free form of government control so that the state cannot bias the content available to the populace. Neither do special interests nor powerful groups control the press. Under such a system, the press provides a wide array of views, with newspapers editorially aligning themselves across the political spectrum.

In order to keep form stifling creativity and so reducing demand for their content, owners and managers give free reign to journalists and other creative personnel. Thus, the media provide a forum for a diverse array of ideas and opinions (Gurevitch, Bennett, Curran and Woollacott, 1982). The populace becomes aware of policy options and can direct policy in its interests. The interests of all groups on issues if importance are aired and debated, with the best compromise being the outcome.

When a social crisis such as international conflict occurs, debate becomes especially heated. Groups and individuals in the society take up sides, and internal disagreement over policy increases. Interests and beliefs lead to opposing views, and the outcome is an increase in the range and forcefulness of debate. This debate is carried in the press, leading to more controversial coverage of the related news. Newspapers supporting the administration will come to its aid in these circumstances, while those opposing it will sharpen their attack.

Hypotheses

Expectations for press behavior under differing conditions in the Pluralist theoretical scheme are as follows.

1. (a) Under normal conditions, a wide range of debate will go on to the press. An ongoing critique of government action, including both Tactical and Strategic criticism, will be normal content.

(b) The opposition (liberal) press will be the most critical.

2. (a) In times of heightened tension between the U.S. and a foreign entry, the critique will increase among those newspapers inclined to oppose the administration (liberal press) and decline among those inclined toward support (conservative press).

(b) This tendency is true of Strategic debate as well as Tactical debate.

3. As the level of conflict subsides, content will return to Pre-Crisis patterns. Hertog, 1990).

Dominance Theory

Dominance theory states that society is exploitative. A small, privileged elite receives an undue share of social groups through exploitation of the masses of society. Marx (1977) argued that in current society the owners of capital (bourgeois) dominate through economic exploitation of the workers (proletariat). Other Dominance theorists have said that an elite is made up of corporate management, military leaders, or governmental elites (Burton and Higley, 1987). The elite rules through a mixture of coercion and consent, called hegemony.

Regardless of the exact makeup of the elite, Dominance theorists agree that the government is not open to interests of all types, but is an instrument of elite control. The relative autonomy of the state is widely debated among Dominance theorists, and ranges from a view that is a simple tool of class interests to a view that the state has considerable power vis-a-vis elite groups and may act in position to them on relative rare occasions (Jessop, 1977 Miliband 1969).

According to the Dominance paradigm, the press serves the elite. Rather than being open to influence by a multitude of groups, it is dominated by a small, powerful, stable class of wealth and privilege (Murdock and Golding, 1979; Dreier, 1982). Content emphasizes a world view which supports the status quo and derides calls for change. Beliefs supporting the political and economic structure, and therefore elite privilege, are never questioned (Breed, 1958). Members of the system, including journalists, are taught to believe that the existing structure of power and privilege is not only natural, but good. This is true even though the real interests of journalists and other groups do not coincide with the status quo.

In dominance theory, an elite class controls both the private and public spheres of the society, and members flow freely among power positions in the two. The state carries out policy of the ruling elite, and the press justifies the policy. The media are secondary in importance to the major capitalist or state institutions, which set and carry out policy in the critical political-economic sphere.

Conflict with other countries is at its base class conflict. U.S. capitalists support capitalists in other countries and oppose socialist and communist governments worldwide. The American uses the military to prevent pro-capitalist elites in other countries (especially less-industrial nations) from losing power to workers and peasants (Chomsky, 1987). The press in the United States is called upon to support military actions and to misrepresent the source of popular unrest in foreign countries. News and editorial content supports the basic government policy and the worldview it represents (there is non Strategic critique) while at the same time it presents a critique of the manner in which policy is carried out (Tactical critique) (Chomsky, 1978; Dorman, 1983; Hallin, 1986).

Hypotheses

For Dominance theory, the predictions concerning coverage of U.S. relations with some foreign entity are:

1. (a) Under normal conditions, little critique of government policy or action in the realm of foreign relations will be available in the mainstream press, regardless of whether an organ is liberal or conservative.

(b) The small amount available will be dominated by Tactical debate.

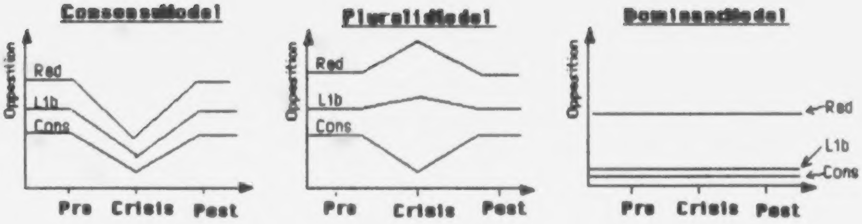
(c) What Strategic debate there is will be dominated by Strategic Support.

2. (a) On occasions of over conflict between the United States and a foreign entity, content will increase in volume, but the patterns of coverage will remain the same.

(b) If anything, the critique of government will become even less common, and Strategic critique extremely rare. However, because critique starts at such a low level, there may be a basement effect here.

3. After the conflict, the content will continue as it has all along, as the powerful justify actions taken during the conflict.

A graphic representation of the predictions concerning support for the Administration during periods of international conflict is shown below. The first mark on the lower axis represents a point at which some triggering event occurs. This is the point where long-run relations between the United States and some foreign entity are disturbed. Tension increases until the second making where some action is taken (in our study by the U.S.) which eventually reduces the action, and finally hostilities end at the third mark, Post-Crisis Period.



(Rad=Radical, Lib=Liberal, Cons=Conservative)

In order to test the three theories outlined above, patterns of coverage for the invasion of Panama by U.S. troops in 1989 will be used.

The invasion of Panama

On December 20, 1989, the Bush administration invaded Panama. The stated goals were[1] : To protect the lives of U.S. nationals, to restore democracy in Panama by installation of a new government considered to have won the May 1989 elections, to protect the Canal Treaty, to combat drug trafficking, and to capture the head of the Panamanian Defense Forces, Gen. Manuel Noriega.

According to Mexico and Central America Report (January 18, 1990),the incidents that triggered off the invasion were the Asamblea de Corregimientos declaration, on December 15, that there was a "state of war" between Panama and the U.S., and the killing of a U.S. marine. The Asamblea declaration was a communique that noted the escalation of provocations by the U.S. had increased since the failed coup attempt in October 1989. Also, the declaration noted an escalation of calls to rebellion by the U.S. backed media broadcasts during the same period.

Views opposing the Administration included one arguing that the key objective was not only to remove Gen. Noriega, but to replace him with politically and ideologically controllable forces. According to this view, most of the charges against Gen. Noriega are true, but it is up to the Panamanian people to resolve their problems, "the U.S. has no business in Panama" (Andrade, 1989, p. 24).

Others see the invasion as a result of a foreign policy based on the Santa Fe Doctrine and President Reagans 1980 campaign promise to restore the rights of the U.S. in the Canal Zone (Urriola, 1988).

---

[1] **A Transcript of Bush's Address on the Decision to use Force in Panama. New York Times, Thursday, December 21, 1989, p. A19.**

Estimates of the civilian death toll range from the official count of 200 to reports of 7,000. The Latin American Times (1990) reported that 18,000 people were made homeless, 100 civilian deaths were not reported, and more than 3,000 wounded.

Latin American nations condemned the invasion, considering it a violation of Panamas sovereignty, and disapproved of the arrest of the Cuban ambassador and the raids of the Nicaraguan ambassadors home. Also, a Mexican airplane that flew to Panama to evacuate Mexicans was not allowed to refuel there. In response, Per recalled its ambassador. The writer and diplomat, Carlos Fuentes, expressed one of the views:

> The invasion of Panama by the U.S. is a disaster. First, it is an international disaster that establishes a violent contrast between the peaceful changes in the former Soviet sphere of influence and the arrogant American inability to accept the ways of negotiation and legality in its own sphere of influence in Central America end the Caribbean. (...).
> The third disaster is the one the U.S. is inflicting on itself-disaster that involves the very heart and soul of its democracy. The U.S. now appears to be an antediluvian monster, frantically treading water in a sea of anachronisms. Has nothing changed since 1903? Is Teddy Roosevelt still in power? Are the Big Stick, dollar diplomacy, and Manifest Destiny still viable policies? (1990, p. 18).

The United Nations General Assembly demanded the immediate cessation of the intervention and the withdrawal from Panama of the armed invasion forces of the United States (UN Chronicle, March 1990, p. 67).

The Panamanian Defense Forces and the Dignity Battalions offered resistance to the invasion until December 24 when Col. Luis del Cid surrendered, and until when Gen. Noriega sought asylum at the Vatican embassy on December 24. On January 3, 1990, he surrendered and was captured by the U.S. army and jailed in Miami, Florida.

he surrendered and was captured by the U.S. army and jailed in Miami, Florida.

The plan for the military invasion was designed the spring of 1989. In October, it was more likely with the removal of the head of the Southern Command in Panama, who opposed the military invasion. The invasion was a climax of 22 months of efforts to remove Gen. Noriega from power (Millet, 1990).

The destabilizing process made Panama, a non-violent country by regional standards, a total chaos with more clearly a military dictatorship. Thus, Millet interprets the Panama invasion as a failure of the U.S. policy there and throughout Central America. The Reagan administration ignored the Panamanian problems as long as the PDF collaborated with the wars of El Salvador and against Nicaragua. The obsession with Nicaragua and the effort to develop the Contras are seen as key elements of the policy. The results have been the continuation of the war in El Salvador, the collapse of the Contras in Nicaragua, and a major policy crisis in Panama.

Millet concludes that Once again, the world has proved unable to protect small, weak states from a tyrannical, well-armed minority, especially when such minority can count with external support (p. 13). He refers to the Panamanian national elite supported by the U.S. administration as a mechanism for the elites to perpetuate in power.

Historical review.

In 1902, the U.S. tried to get permission from Zelaya, the Nicaraguan president, to build a canal there (Weeks, 1988). He opposed it because the Roosevelt administration wanted to annex the territory surrounding the canal to control and protect the waterway. So, Roosevelt looked a little farther South, to Panama.

In 1903, the independence of the northern Colombian province was declared, and Panama was created as a country with the military support of the U.S. to prevent the Colombian reaction (Ropp, 1990). The independence was staged by the T. Roosevelts administration with the support of the French miner Bunau-Varilla, who later signed the Canal treaty.

The canal treaty with Bunau-Varilla gave the U.S. the right to use the canal zone as part of the U.S. territory. Military bases were installed as means of protecting the canal.

The Panamanian elite came to depend on U.S. support to maintain its power. Very often the political conflicts were solved by the U.S. armed interventions (some authors state 13, 18, or 20 interventions). Frequent changes of government occurred as one or another elite faction would carry favor with the U.S. State Department.

Among the populace, a nationalist sentiment gradually developed. In January 1964, a group of students tried to raise the Panamanian flag in the canal zone, according to treaty agreements (Urriola, 1988). The U.S. citizens reacted with violence and the army killed some Panamanians. The riots and protests following this incident inflamed the growing nationalist sentiment and eventually caused the overthrow of the U.S. backed elites in the country. In time, the nationalist movement forced a renegotiation of the Canal Treaties.

In 1968, Panamas national Guard carried out a coup and took over the government. Eventually Omar Torrijos became the head of the National Guard. He developed a populist reformist government to help the poor improve their standard of life. He initiated a housing program, health and schools programs by expanding government employment and spending. Torrijos had U.S. support at first, but relations with the U.S.deteriorated over time. To control the Panamanian government he created the PRD (Radical Democratic Party) political party.

On September 7, 1977, the Torrijos-Carter treaty was signed. It establishes that on December 1999, the administration of the canal will be transferred to Panama. The treaty was opposed by Ronald Reagan during his 1980 presidential campaign.

In 1981, Torrijos was killed in an air plane crash. After that, the Panamanian military leaders agreed to a secret pact to share the power in order to control over the country through the the PDF and the PRD (Hertog, 1990).

In 1983, Gen. Noriega became commander in chief of the National Guard, which he eventually expanded into the Panamanian Defense Forces. In the 1984 national elections, he refused to act according to the secret agreement and support the PDF candidate. Noriegas candidate was declared the winner. Accusations of election fraud were made, but the new government received U.S. recognition.

In 1987, a crisis occurred when Diaz-Herrera, named by the secret agreements as Gen. Noriegas successor as the chief commander of the PDF was retired by Noriega only two months before assuming power. The betrayed commander publicly denounced corruptions and crimes of the PDF and Noriega. Public protests broke out. The military took more aggressive actions and a state of emergency was declared. At that time Noriega still was supported in the United States by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). But in late 1987, the Congress approved moderate sanctions against Panama, such as suspension of sugar imports and military aid, to be effective in 1988. In January 1988, Noriega was asked to resign by the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense. On February, Noriega was indicted on drug trafficking in Miami, Florida. A few days later, Noriega demanded the U.S. close the military bases and withdraw its troops. That same month the President of Panama traveled to the U.S. and met with State department officials. When he came back, he dismissed Noriega as the commander of the PDF. The new commander appointed by the president refused, and the president was dismissed and forced into hiding.

In March 1988, the U.S. began military maneuvers in Panama. The Reagan Administration applied economic sanctions against Panama in March of 1988. The sanctions goal was to remove Gen. Noriega from power. They included withholding all U.S.payments to Panama, including $7 million of Canal Revenues and more severe inspection of goods and people entering the U.S. from Panama.

The sanctions destabilized the country. They had the effect of limiting the availability of cash, which damaged the large banking sector and crippled the Panamanian economy. The Mexico and Central America Report (January 18, 1990, p. 3) publishes that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) decreased from 40% to 25% between the time the U.S. sanctions began and January of this year. The unemployment rate was more than 25%, the total debt increased to $5.5 billion with $700 million only in interests (Millet, 1990). At the end of 1989, the countrys cash was only $70 million.

Protests and strikes started triggered by the economic crisis. Five days after the sanctions were applied, there was a coup attempt, led by the national police chief. A state of emergency was declared by the government and the military cracked down.

The sanctions did not oust Gen. Noriega because Panama had business with other countries, and support from other Latin American countries that saw the sanctions as a violation of Panamas sovereignty. In addition, the threat of legal action against others in the PDF kept his support there strong. Noriega could resist the Florida indictment while in power.

The Reagan administration started negotiations and presented Noriega the option to stay in his country to May 1989, when presidential elections were to be held. Noriega didnt accept the terms (Ropp, 1990). After the negotiations collapsed, the Administration looked for a military policy. In May 1989, Panama held presidential elections. Noriega was accused of fraud when his candidates were declared winners. There were violent attacks on protesters in Panama and the U.S. escalated its military pressure (Siemens, 1990). The government installed by the U.S. after the invasion is believed to have won the election.

In October 1989, the U.S. encouraged (Cao, 1990) a group PDF officers to oust Noriega. The coup failed and the Bush Administration was criticized for the way it was handled.

Methodology

Research design.

Coding categories representing tactical and strategic critique were developed through a careful review of literature concerning the events leading up to and including the invasion. They were designed to represent a range of arguments in support of and in opposition to the officially pronounced reasons for the invasion.

The main objective is to know how the debate is presented for three different types of magazines: (Time (conservative), Newsweek (liberal), and The Nation (radical). They were selected from the General Periodicals Index database. The selection relied primarily on popular perceptions of Time as conservative, Newsweek as liberal, and The Nation as radical leftist. These perceptions are arbitrary, not informed selection. To my knowledge, there has been no empirically derived placement of these media on the political continuum. Conservative is defined as supportive of generalized conservative political program that oppose the government regulation of business as well as support for strong military and aggressive confrontation with leftist governments in foreign policy. Liberal is conceived as supportive of domestic welfare state and civil rights, at the foreign policy level will support economic aid and negotiated settlements over military force. Radical leftist would support major structural change in the U.S. and active supportive of social revolution in other countries, specially for the less industrialized ones.

From this perspective, Time is perceived as more supportive, Newsweek as moderately supportive, and The Nation as more consistently oppositional and critical of the status quo. A profile of these news magazines is summarized in Table 5.

The independent variables is the intensity of the conflict between U.S. and Panama. The conflict is the 1989 Panama invasion by the U.S. The dependent variables are the support for or opposition to the Bush Administrations Panama policy at two levels: Tactical and Strategic.

The paragraph was chosen as a unit of analysis because it makes up a single related set of thoughts so that it can be scored according to any number of categories. In a single paragraph, for example, very often many categories can be scored. It cannot happen with the sentence because of its limited context. So, the paragraph provides a larger context than the sentence. For a contexts as complicated as the Panama invasion debate, it is necessary to have context for the coding in order to avoid making major errors in applying the coding scheme.

The presence in a paragraph of each position outlined in the coding scheme, leads to a score of 1 for that position.

Test of the models.

The theoretical models are tested by proportions of Opposition and Support, both Tactical and Strategic (see Table 1, 2, 3, and 4), and compared among media at the Pre-crisis, Crisis and Post-crisis periods.

The time span to select the news stories was established according to the development of the conflict:

1. The Pre-crisis Period began May 1989, when the declared winners of the Panamanian presidential elections were accused of fraud.

2. The Crisis period began December 20, 1989, the day when the invasion started. The period ended January 6, 1990, when Noriega was brought to the U.S.

3. The Post-crisis period began January 6, 1990, when the amount of coverage of the invasion decreased. The period ended April 1990.

A total of 69 news stories with a total of 790 paragraphs were selected.

The themes to establish the categories to measure the Tactical Support or Opposition to the administration are the following:

1. Whether or not the U.S. citizens in Panama were in danger.
2. Whether or not the U.S. invaded to combat drug trafficking
3. Whether or not the Panama Canal Treaty was in danger.
4. Whether or not the U.S. is cheating on the canal treaty.
5. Whether or not Panama is engaged in military aggression.
6. Whether or not the invasion had support.
7. Whether or not Noriegas government was corrupt.
8. Whether or not Endaras government was corrupt.
9. Whether or not Noriega is a drug and gun smuggler.
10. Whether or not Noriega has support or opposition.
11. General support or opposition for the administration.
12. Other support or opposition.

Strategic Categories.

Categories representing Strategic Support accepted the Administration policies

The themes to establish the categories to measure the Strategic Support or Opposition to the administration are the following:

1. Whether or not the U.S. invaded to restore democracy.
2. Whether or not Panama is a case of Cold War struggle.
3. Whether or not Panama is a case of communist expansion.
4. Whether or not Panama is a case of North/South conflict.
5. Whether or not the U.S. is imperialist.
6. Whether or not the U.S. is violating Panamas sovereignty.
7. Whether or not Endaras government is legitimate.
8. Whether or not the administration is at fault
9. General support or opposition to U.S. policy.
10. Whether or not Noriega was democratic.
11. Other support or opposition not considered in these categories.

Analysis of the Data and Results

Paragraphs per week.

The average number of paragraphs per week dedicated by each magazine to the coverage of the conflict in each period is illustrated in Figure 5. Time (TM) has the greatest increase in the number of paragraphs: from 2.8 during the Pre-crisis period to 33 during the Crisis period. Time then drops to 2.4 during the Post-crisis period (see Table 1).

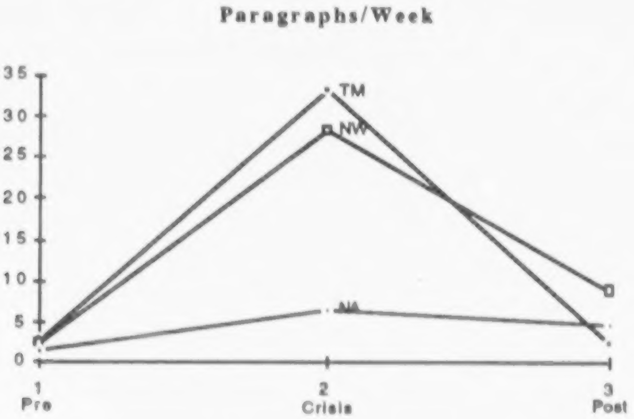


Figure 5. Paragraphs per week

Newsweek (NW) also demonstrates a large increase in the number of paragraphs per week from the Pre-crisis period(2.5) to the Crisis period (28.3) (see Table 2). The number of paragraphs drops to 8.9 during the Post-crisis period. A large part of the Post-crisis coverage is represented by a long article, with 100 paragraphs, describing the prison where Gen. Noriega was likely to be sent.

The Nation (NA) shows a slight increase in the average from the Pre-crisis to Crisis compared to the other two magazines. From Pre-crisis to Crisis it increases from 1.3 to 6.5, and from Crisis to Post-crisis, the decrease is small: 6.5 to 4.7 (see Table 3).

Totals of individual categories.

The four positions with the highest scores for Time support the Administration. The largest category (see Table 6), is that Noriega is Not Democratic. It was present in 34 paragraphs. This is a category that represents Strategic Support. The next three categories represent Tactical Support: Noriega is not popular, Noriega is a drug smuggler, and General Support for the Administration.

There are some coding categories which did not appear, such as Whether or Not the U.S. Violated International Law and Panamas Sovereignty, Whether or Not Endaras Government is Legitimate, Whether or Not Endaras Government is Corrupt, Whether or Not the Goal of the Invasion was to Combat Drug Trafficking, Whether or Not there was a Policy Failure, Whether or Not the U.S.was Cheating on the Canal Treaty, and Whether or Not the Administration was at Fault.

Of Newsweeks four main positions, three are supportive and one is a case of Tactical Opposition. The largest category (see Table 7) is that Noriega is Not Popular. The next three categories are: Noriega is a Drug Smuggler, Noriega is Not Democratic, and General Tactical Opposition to the Administration.

Newsweek stories do not debate about Panamas sovereignty, Whether or Not the U.S. is Acting as an Imperialist Nation, Whether or Not the Administration is at Fault, Whether or Not the Panama Conflict is a Case of North/South Conflict, or Whether or Not there is a policy Failure.

The Nations four top positions represent Tactical and Strategic Opposition. The largest category (see Table 8) is Tactical: General Opposition to the U.S. Administration. The second largest is Strategic: General Opposition to U.S. Policy. The third is Tactical: General Opposition to the Invasion. The fourth one is Strategic: The U.S. is Violating Panamas Sovereignty. The categories absent from the debate are Whether or Not the U.S. citizens in Panama were in Danger, Whether or Not Panama was Engaged in Provocation, Whether or Not Noriegas government was Corrupt.

In both Time and Newsweek, four out of the four main categories refer to Noriega, which means a personal focus that draws attention away from the international and political dimension of the conflict and the debate. The four main categories of the The Nation are located outside of the personal focus for the conflict.

Total Opposition.

The Total Opposition score (sum of Tactical and Strategic

Opposition) was divided by the Grand Total score (sum of all scores) for each magazine in order to develop a percentage of content which was oppositional. This ratio can be compared across magazines and across time (Pre-crisis, Crisis, Post-crisis). Figure 6 shows that Time and Newsweek news stories have a very low ratio of opposition in the first two periods, and a moderate ratio during the Post-crisis period (see also Table 4).

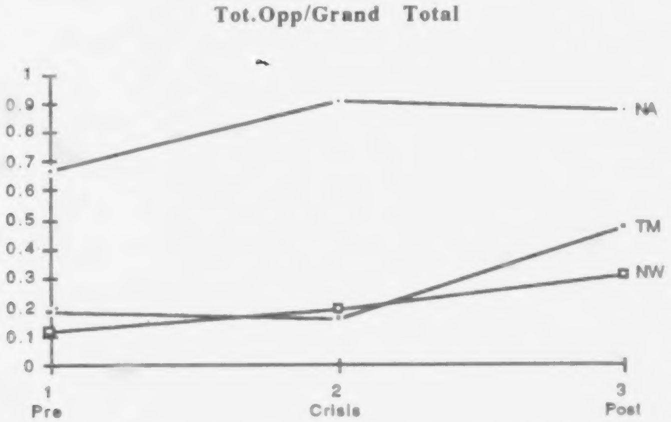


Figure 6. Total Opposition over Grand Total

For Time, there is a decrease in opposition from Pre-crisis to Crisis, and then an increase from Crisis to Post-crisis, as predicted by either Pluralist or Consensus theory. For Newsweek, the ratio climbs from Pre-crisis to Crisis, and then again to Post-crisis. This is not predicted by any of the theories. Newsweek is very similar to Time, although Pluralist model would predict a significant difference. The Nation shows a high ratio of Total Opposition throughout, and is significantly different from the other magazines. This is predicted by Pluralist theory. The ratio for The Nation increases from Pre-crisis to Crisis and then decreases from Crisis to Post-crisis, the pattern predicted by Pluralist theory.

There is a low ratio of Opposition during the Crisis period in both Time and Newsweek, as predicted by both Dominance and Consensus theories. Because of The Nations high ratio of opposition, on the whole the evidence supports the pluralist model that predicts more opposition in the liberal and radical media at the Crisis period and increased support among conservative press.

However, the low ratio of opposition in the mainstream press as well as the lack of difference between Time and Newsweek supports Dominance theory for the mainstream press. It is the addition of The Nation, a relatively low circulation (see Table 5) alternative publication which rounds out the debate (see Table 9).

Total strategic debate.

To test the discussion of strategic matters as a portion of news coverage Total Strategic debate (Strategic Opposition and Support cores added) was compared to total score (See Figure 7). The ratio decreases steadily over the three periods for all three sources. The Nations ratio of Strategic to Total debate is the largest of the three for all three periods (See Table 4). The declining level of Strategic debate over time does not clearly support one of the three theories. The decline may be simply due to Tactical Categories such as support for the invasion not being relevant in the Pre-crisis period.

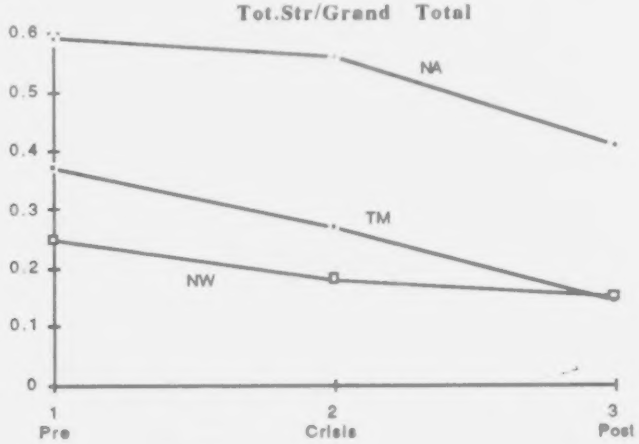


Figure 7. Total Strategic over Grand Total

Strategic Opposition.

In order to test the claims of Dominance theory that Strategic Opposition cannot be found in U.S. media and of Consensus theory that it is available but only when external conflict is not occurring, the ratio of Strategic Opposition to total score was graphed over the three periods for each of the newsmagazines. Time and Newsweek have a very low ratio in every period (less than 1%), supporting Dominance theory (See Figure 8).

The Nation demonstrates a high ratio of Strategic Opposition, with an increase from .44 during the Pre-crisis period to .52 during the Crisis period. The level drops to .37 during the Post-crisis period.

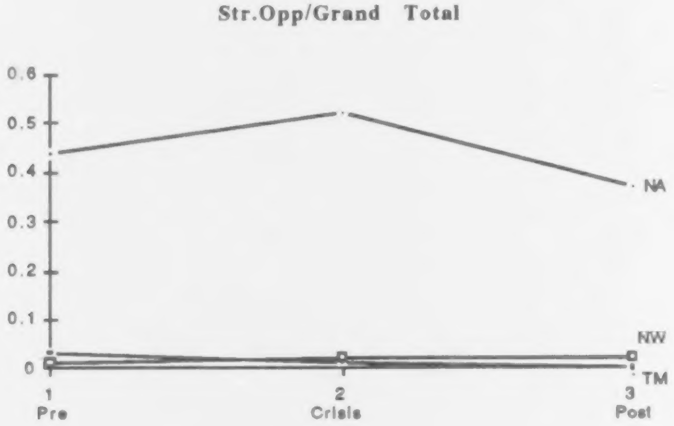


Figure 8. Strategic Opposition over Grand Total

Thus, once again the Dominance and Pluralist theories each receive partial support. The mainstream media do not carry any more than a minute amount of Strategic opposition at any time during the conflict. However, The Nation carries a very large ratio of Strategic Opposition to Total Score, which increases during the Crisis period, both characteristics supportive of Pluralist theory.

Finally, a test to see how heavily weighted toward support or opposition the strategic debate alone was provided by dividing the Strategic Opposition score to Total Strategic score (See Figure 9). Throughout the conflict, the ratio is very low for Time and Newsweek and high for The Nation.

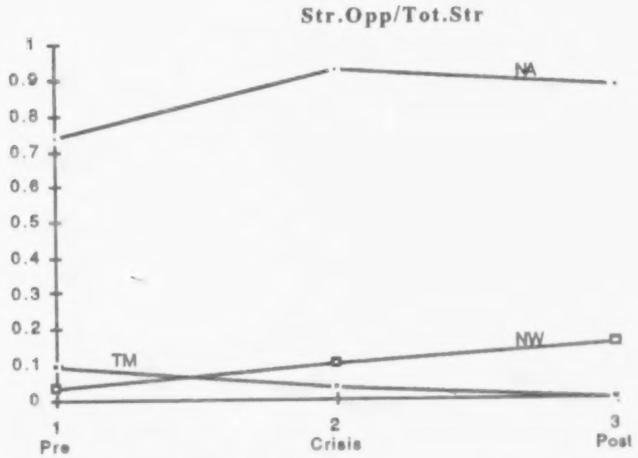


Figure 9. Strategic Opposition over Total Strategic

Because of the high ratio of Strategic Opposition found in The Nation, the Pluralist model prediction fits the data best. Although the data support the Pluralist model overall, if the research had only looked at the mainstream media publications Time and Newsweek, the Dominance model, with some evidence of a Consensus deflection, would have been most appropriate (See table 9).

Limitations of the study.

A main limitation of this study is that the media sample is small. Three news magazines have been analyzed. Only one of them is considered alternative media. If more time and resources had been available, the sample for this study would have included a more extreme right and left magazines. However, the pattern found is so clear that it is expected to appear also for a sample that includes those magazines considered as extreme in the political spectrum.

One more limitation is that the data are specific for the Panama invasion, so more studies of different conflicts should be analyzed.

Review of the debate about U.S. Panama relations carried on to develop coding categories drew mostly from U.S. scholarly work. To include scholarly work from the international community may provide more themes for the coding categories.

An attempt should be made to define more specifically the political orientation of the magazines analyzed in future research.

The use of the paragraph as a unit of analysis can be considered a limitation because the paragraph size vary across magazines. In longer paragraphs a single category may appear several times, but will only be scored once. It may bias the results.

It is necessary for future studies to expand the range of magazines from the more extreme right to the more extreme left.

Conclusions

This study has tested the predictions made by the three theoretical models: Consensus, Pluralist and Dominance. The set of categories used to operationalize the models were drawn from a wide range of debate about the Panama invasion representing a wide range of support and opposition.

Time and Newsweek commonly thought to represent significantly differing ideological views, presented very similar patterns of opposition and support in their coverage of the Panama invasion.

The findings demonstrate a constricted range of debate on the part of Time and Newsweek. The dimensions of the conflict presented by these magazines fall heavily in one of our four quadrants-Tactical Support. Those who read such accounts would have to supplement their news reading to get a clear understanding of the dimensions of the debate about the conflict.

In this sense, the lack of criticism and opposition to the official view suggests Time and Newsweeks deference to authority in the area of foreign affairs news. The coverage pattern presented by these two magazines fits the predictions of the Dominance model because they increase a lot the amount of coverage but remain supportive. Time and Newsweek adopt an us/them perspective in favor of the U.S. government and against the Panamanian administration in conflict with the U.S.

The Nation has no significant pro U.S. administration coverage. Its coverage is oppositional in both the Tactical and Strategic realms (see Table 9). Consequently, for this magazine the coverage pattern predicted by Consensus and Dominance theories do not fit. The predictions of the Pluralist model receive strong support from the patterns of coverage in The Nation. However, as many Dominance theorists have noted, magazines such as The Nation have a very small following and little, if any, of the political clout, of the mainstream media, represented by Time and Newsweek.

In essence, it appears to be necessary for an audience member to read both mainstream and alternative media accounts in order to be presented with rich debate over U.S. foreign policy actions.

It can be concluded too that the conflict provoked a quantitative response in the mainstream media but that did not necessarily mean a wider debate. Despite a large increase in the amount of coverage of this conflict in the newsmagazines, the range of debate about the invasion remained restricted within a relatively small topical frame.

Suggestions for future research.

More studies of U.S. media coverage of foreign affairs should be done using the theoretical models tested here in order to know better their predictive capabilities. As it was said before, the sample analyzed in this study is small, so more mainstream and alternative media should be covered by future studies.

The mainstream and alternative media from the country involved in the conflict with the U.S. should be studied to notice the differences or similarities in the patterns of coverage.

Bibliography

Andrade, V. (1990). Panama through Latin eyes. World Press Review, 36(7), 25.

Angus, I., & Jhally, S. (1989). Cultural Politics in Contemporary America. New York: Routledge.

Bred, W. (1958). Mass Communication and Socio-cultural Integration. Social Forces, 37(2), December, 109-116.

Burton, M. G. & Higley, J. (1987). Invitation to Elite Theory: The Basic Contentions. Reconsidered in G. W. Domhoff & T. R. Dye (eds.), Power, Elites and Organizations. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE, 219-238.

Carey, J. W. (1975). A Cutltural Approach to Communication. Communication, 2(1), December, 1-22.

Cohen, B. (1983). According to official sources.... In NACLA Report on the Americas. July/August, 7-21.

Consumer Magazine and Agri-Media Rate and Data, 72(1), 1990.

Coser, L. A. (1956). The functions of social conflict. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.

Chomsky, N. (1990). The New World Order. Conference presented at Hampshire College, Amherst, MA, September.

Dorman, A. W. (1985). The media: Plying the governments game. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, 41(7), August, 118-124.

Dorman, A. W. (1986). Peripheral vision: U.S. journalism and the Third World. World Policy Journal, 3(3), 419-445.

Downing, D. H. (1988). Trouble in the backyard: Soviet media reporting on the Afghanistan conflict. Journal of Communication, 38(2), 5-32.

Directory of Corporate Affiliations, 1, 1990.

Fuentes, C. (1990). Some lessons from Panama. A strong Latin condemnation. World Press Review, 36(7), 17-18.

Gans, H. J. (1979). Deciding whats news. New York: Pantheon Books.

Graber, D. (1980). Mass media and American politics. Washington: Congressional Quarterly.

Hallin, D. C. (1983). White paper, red scare. NACLA Report on the Americas. July/August, 2-6.

Hallin, D. C. (1985). The American news media: A critical theory perspective. In J. Forester (Ed.), Critical theory and public life (pp. 121-146). Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press; or in M. Gurevitch, & M. Levy (Eds.), (1987). Mass Communication Yearbook 6 (pp. 293-318). Beverly Hills: Sage.

Hallin, D. C. (1986). The uncensored war. The media and Vietnam. New York: Oxford University Press.

Herman, E. S., & Chomsky, N. (1988). Manufacturing consent. New York: Pantheon Books.

Hertog, J. (1990). Elite press support for the administration during periods of external conflict: A test of three theories. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Landau, S. (1988). The dangerous doctrine: National security and U.S. foreign policy. Boulder, Co: Westview Press.

Latin American Times. (1990). Panama: The medical cost of Americas invasion. 10(2), 17-19.

Leis, R. (1990). Panama. The other side of midnight. NACLA Report on the Americas, 23(6), 4-6.

Marx, K. (1977). The German Ideology. In D. McLellan (Ed.), Karl Marx: Selected Writings. Oxford, England: Oxford University.

McAnany, E. (1983). Television and crisis: Ten years of network news coverage of Central America 1972-1981. Media, Culture and Society, 5(2), 199-212.

Mexico and Central America Report, January 18, 1990.

Millet, R. L. (1990). The aftermath of intervention: Panama 1990. Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, 32(1), 1-15.

Moodys Industrial Manual, 1,1990.

Ropp, S. T. (1990). Military entrenchment and decay in Panama. Current History, 89(544), 17-37.

Scott, W. A. (1955). Reliability of content analysis: The case of nominal scale. Public Opinion Quarterly, Fall, 321-325.

Spence, J. (1983). The great Salvador election blitz. In NACLA report on the Americas. July/August, 11-19.

Standard and Poors Register of Corporations, Directors and Executives, 1990.

UN Chronicle. (1990). Assembly demands immediate halt of United states intervention in Panama. March, 1990, 67-20.

Urriola, O. (1988). Panama: Is the day of freedom to come? World Marxist Review, 31(5), 132-137.

Weeks, J. (1988). Of puppets and heroes. NACLA Report on the Americas, July/August, 12-19.

Wiarda, H. J. (1990). United States policy in Latin America. Current History, 89(543), 1-4, 31.

Wirth, L. (1947). Consensus and mass communication. American Sociological Review, 13(1), 1-15.

Zindar, J. M. (1988). Opposition Outflanked. NACLA Report on the Americas, July/August, p. 31-35.

Desert Storm and the Tundra Telegraph:

Information Diffusion in a Media-Poor Environment

by

Larry Pearson
Director

Center for Information Technology
University of Alaska Anchorage
2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd., Suite 209
Anchorage, AK 99508

Phone 907-276-6904
BITnet: AFLLP@ALASKA

Presented to the Mass Communication and Society Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
AEJMC Annual Convention, Boston

August 8, 1991

Abstract

American television viewers, for the first time, watched the progress of a war on live television during Operation Desert Storm. But were those who relied on television as well informed as those who were also reading about the war in newspapers?

Television and radio were the only timely news media available to many rural Alaskans. They lacked local newspapers. Distant dailies, if they reached rural communities at all, might arrive days late. Existence of this media-poor environment provided an opportunity to compare the Persian Gulf knowledge of those dependent on broadcast media with those who were also able to get war news from other media.

The findings indicate that being media poor was equivalent to being information poor. Education was more strongly related to knowledge than any other variable. Purposeful use of television to gather information was also related to knowledge.

"I don't have a radio. I don't listen to any. Only get one station and it's hazardous to my mental health . . . TV was out for three months. I missed the war." -- survey respondent from rural Alaska.

Q. Who is the U.S. commander in the Persian Gulf? A. *"Can see face on CNN . . . not Colin Powell . . . fat, short hair, funny haircut, sits with legs apart."*

"We only got TV because of the war. In rural areas our choices are limited. I would like access to better programs on radio, news programs. We would watch less TV and wouldn't have cable if we could get regular TV service." -- survey respondent from rural Alaska.

In a country where an abundance of media is taken for granted and information overload is viewed as a serious problem, many Alaskans appear to be an anomaly. For they are media poor. They have no daily newspapers. They receive only a single radio station and only one broadcast TV station: the statewide Rural Alaska Television Network (RATNET) channel.

Their situation resembles in some respects that of rural residents in other states where in recent years metropolitan newspapers have excised their least profitable circulation areas. The difference is that daily newspapers never have been easily available in the 250 Alaskan villages scattered across what is sometimes described as a sub-continent, an area with one-fifth the land mass of the contiguous 48 states. Most of these communities can be reached only by small airplane or by boat. Message services with names like "Tundra Drums," "Caribou Clatter," "Bush Pipeline" and "Traplines" broadcast by rural radio stations provide the only means of quickly reaching Alaskans traveling in the bush and those lacking telephones.

None of these rural communities has a local daily, and fewer than 40 have newspapers that are published weekly or less frequently. The state government, however, beginning in the mid-1970s helped construct a broadcast media system that reaches nearly every Alaskan. This system includes a state-operated satellite channel that under a dispensation from the FCC and agreements with ABC,CBS, NBC, FOX and PBS, broadcasts programs from the Anchorage television stations. The Rural Alaska Television Network channel has no production capability of its own.

The state also provides a significant portion of the funding for a statewide network of more than 20 public radio stations and four public TV stations. Only one of the public TV stations, KYUK-TV in the west coast regional center of Bethel, is located in a rural area. The broadcasts of most public radio stations extend into areas where there are no commercial stations.

In contrast, the 226,000 residents of Anchorage live in one of the few remaining American cities with two competing newspapers. They have five VHF and two UHF television channels and a 45-channel cable system.

Six other communities in Alaska fall somewhere between these media extremes. They have dailies, though none of these publishes all seven days of the week, and it is relatively easy in these communities to obtain the Anchorage newspapers. Several commuter communities within 60 miles of Anchorage as well as communities on the Kenai Peninsula south of Anchorage fall in this middle ground in access to media sources of information.

Is being media poor a bad thing? Have rural Alaskans simply escaped big-city information congestion? Or are they indeed information poor? Alaska provides an opportunity for researchers to explore the relationships between media diversity and information diversity. The study reported here, by probing for knowledge of a war in which television coverage dominated, took advantage of the opportunity to compare Alaskans reliant by necessity on the broadcast media with those who also had easy access to print coverage of the war.

The relevant research traditions

Uses and gratifications research, with its emphasis on why people use media, and knowledge gap research, with its focus on conditions that lead to acquisition of information at differential rates within a social system, provided the theoretical base for this study. Both research traditions encourage the asking of questions about why people use media as they do. The answers typically are to be found through examination of system-level variables -- community characteristics, media system characteristics, etc. -- and individual characteristics indicating status in the community, interest in the subject matter and ability to assimilate it.

Terms describing audience behavior such as "motivations," "uses," "needs," and "gratifications" can be traced back to the 1940s, where they began to appear in work such as that of Herzog (1944) and Berelson (1949). In recent years "uses" (see Windahl, 1981), "gratifications sought" and "gratifications obtained" have received useful operational definitions (see Lometti, Reeves and Bybee, 1977; Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1979; Palmgreen, Wenner and Rayburn, 1981; McLeod, Bybee, and Durall, 1982). Questions in the current study provided indications of amount of media use and the gratifications Alaskans sought from the various media during and immediately after the last days of the Persian Gulf war.

Lasswell (1948) identified surveillance of the environment as a media function. While other media functions have attracted a variety of labels, "surveillance" is still generally accepted by uses and gratifications researchers as the best label for an important audience activity (see Weaver and Buddenbaum, 1980). Lazarsfeld and Kendall (1949) looked at levels of audience activity and the "relative importance of the various media for different subgroups in the population" -- one of the aims of this study. Rubin and Perse (1987) also treated audience activity as a variable.

There have been repeated efforts to look at these issues in media-poor environments. Berelson (1949), Kimball (1959), and Elliott and Rosenberg (1987) took advantage of newspaper strikes to examine media use at times of media deprivation. Cohen (1981), DeBock (1980), and Windahl, Höjerback and Hedinsson (1986) examined media use during broadcast strikes.

While uses and gratifications studies can provide explanations of why individuals use media, they fall short of telling us how useful the media may be for individuals and for the social system. Knowledge gap research with its concern for how knowledge is diffused more directly addresses this issue. The original knowledge gap hypotheses were that the acquisition of information at different rates can be explained by differences in formal education (Tichenor, Olien and Donohue, 1970). Most subsequent research has supported these hypotheses (see Gaziano, 1982).

Tichenor, Donohue and Olien also looked at relationships between differences in media structure "as an aspect of total community structure" and levels of knowledge about public affairs and found, "Usually, the higher the use of and preference for print media, the higher the level of knowledge about public affairs topics" (1980, p. 390). Gaziano concluded that residents of an inner-city neighborhood who relied on broadcast rather than print were information poor because of the relatively superficial content of the broadcast media (1989).

Gaziano, in a review of 58 knowledge gap studies, found that 17 used awareness of topics, 26 used depth of knowledge and 15 used both as indicators of knowledge gaps (1982). An earlier Alaskan study, using awareness of four topics as the knowledge indicator, found that rural Alaskans who used the available media purposefully were more likely to be aware of the topics than were their urban counterparts (Pearson, 1990). That study did not attempt to determine how well informed the respondents were on those topics. An objective of the current study was to measure depth of knowledge.

There is some reason to believe that the type of question asked can favor different media. Shoemaker, Schooler and Danielson (1989) found newspaper-reliant people did better with open-ended recall measures but television-reliant people did just as well when multiple-choice recognition measures were used. A theoretical concern with media usefulness within a social system would suggest, however, that the best questions would be sensitive to media functions as well as media forms.

Other research that has looked at how the habit of media use is developed has related it to integration into the community (Lain, 1986) as indicated by factors such as length of residence (Stamm and Weis, 1982) and organization membership (Stamm and Campbell, 1983). The current study also uses an index of political activity as an indicator of integration.

Alaskans, Their Media and the Research Questions

How did the Alaskan respondents in the current study who did best at identifying Persian Gulf figures do so well? The possible explanations that are suggested by the research literature, each one seeming to advance a little beyond its predecessor:

- They spend more time with the media (users),
- They are more attentive to the media (uses and gratifications),
- They use media more selectively (gratifications, media deprivation studies),

These behaviors may reflect other factors:

- Their media use is related to their degree of integration in their community (integration studies),

- They are best equipped, by education or intelligence, to understand media messages (knowledge gap, information gap studies).

The list may not be exhaustive; the categories within it are not exclusive. Several -- or all -- of these factors may work together to distinguish the best informed respondents.

This study, in retesting these hypotheses in media-rich, media-poor environments, is also looking for indications of how differences in media systems might contribute to knowledge gaps. It is trying to answer the research question:

- Are individuals who use the media purposefully in a media-poor environment as knowledgeable as their counterparts in a media-rich environment? (A corollary: How do people in a media-rich environment who do not use the media purposefully compare to purposeful media users in a media-poor environment? If there's a gap, how big is it?)

In analyzing Alaskans' media behavior, it is important to keep in mind how different that state's various media systems are. Alaskans have three distinct media systems, and there is evidence that individual media in the different systems are not functionally equivalent. Previous research found evidence that radio, as the most local medium for many rural Alaskans, has assumed some of the functions of newspapers (Pearson, 1990). The front pages of the small-city dailies in the first days of the ground war told a quite different story than did the front pages of the Anchorage papers. And the war wasn't news for the rural weeklies.

The *Anchorage Daily News* on Sunday, Feb. 24, carried the banner headline: "ALLIES ATTACK" with a deck: "U.S. Forces Storm Kuwait; Marines Capture Island." The *Sitka Sentinel* didn't publish Saturday or Sunday. On Monday it carried a two-column , three-line headline: "U.S. Cool to Iraqi Order to Withdraw" beside a two-column photo of the governor at a Republican party dinner in Sitka Saturday night. War coverage in the weekly *Nome Nugget* was limited to a Jan. 24 story on 55-gallon oil drums and plastic fencing set up as a barricade outside the airport terminal to deter terrorists: "The increased security has been met mostly with snickers . . . 'Who'd bother with Nome? There's nothing but churches and bars here,' laughed Jim Winterberg about the barricades."

The RATNET television channel that is available to rural Alaskans is roughly equivalent to a commercial television channel. It carries a mixture of programs from the four networks as well as PBS and Alaska-produced programs from the Anchorage commercial TV and public broadcasting stations. It provided war coverage selected from the networks. One rural respondent said: "We only got TV because of the war. In rural areas our choices are limited."

Reports on the war were also available on the public radio stations that reach much of the state. A Kodiak Island respondent volunteered: "I get most of my information from a National Public Radio program which is on every morning for two hours from 6 to 8. It is half local and half national." A public station may be the only one available to some rural Alaskans; in Anchorage it competes with 20 commercial stations. But some Alaskans are out of range of any radio signal. Several respondents made comments like, "Don't get radio here; can get it in town," "I have no radio and can not get radio stations," or "We don't get clear reception of radio so we don't listen much."

Not all rural Alaskans with cable were able to follow war developments on the Cable News Network. Of 84 rural cable systems listed in the March 1991 issue of an Alaskan cable guide, 27 did not carry CNN.

Methods

Five hundred randomly selected Alaska residents were interviewed by telephone between Feb. 23 -- the first day of the ground war in the Persian Gulf -- and March 11, 1991. The sample was designed to be representative of all adult Alaskans. For analysis, responses were divided into rural, small urban and Anchorage sub-samples.

Respondents were asked questions about amount of use of the various media, media usefulness for gratifying needs and media preferences for gratifying needs. They were asked to name personalities in the Persian Gulf war, and about their socio-economic status and community involvement.

A surveillance variable was constructed for each of three media -- television, radio, newspapers -- and for friends from two variables with high correlations (Pearson r's ranged from .52 to .68 and averaged .55 for the rural, small urban and Anchorage sub-samples). The variables: "I [watch television/read the newspaper/listen to radio/talk to friends] to get to know the quality of our leaders" and "I [. . .] to keep up with the way government is doing its job."

A Desert Storm knowledge variable was constructed from seven questions asking respondents to name figures based on occupational descriptions. The figures included Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein, three diplomats and three sources of military information. The diplomats were U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. The sources of military information were U.S. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, U.S. Persian Gulf commander H. Norman Schwarzkopf, and either of two CNN reporters in Baghdad, Peter Arnett or Bernard Shaw.

A political activity variable was constructed from five questions asking whether respondents had engaged in political activities other than voting in the most recent election. Activities were discussing issues with a candidate, allowing a candidate to post signs, volunteering time, making a contribution, and taking part in a campaign in some other way.

The sample frame was constructed and the interviewing conducted by the Institute for Social and Economic Research of the University of Alaska Anchorage. The telephone sample frame contained all prefixes in the state, including residential numbers on military bases. In more populated areas, random four-digit numbers within each prefix were generated and samples were drawn so that the number of households selected in each prefix was, within random error, proportional to the size of the prefix. In less populated areas, the residential numbers contained in the most current telephone directories were entered directly into the computer. Interviews were completed for 70 percent of the working telephone numbers selected for the sample.

In early 1991, 86 percent of Alaska residents had telephones; however, only about 60 percent of the state's most rural households had residential phone service. This limits the generalizability of estimates made for rural areas.

Alaskans' Media Use

Anchorage respondents, living as they did in a city with two daily newspapers as well as special-interest weeklies, were more likely than other Alaskans to report looking at the most recent newspaper. They spent more time with their newspaper, too -- an average of 39 minutes compared with 29 minutes for rural Alaskans who read the most recent newspaper (See Table 1).

On average, they spent more time listening to the radio than did other Alaskans. The difference was small enough, however, to be a drive-time effect. Anchorage respondents presumably listened on their way to and from work. Residents of the largest of the urban areas -- Fairbanks and Juneau -- may also have listened to the radio during drive times.

TV use patterns were less clear. About the same proportion of rural and Anchorage residents subscribed to cable, and they spent about the same amount

Table 1

Media Use by Place of Residence

	Rural	Small Urban*	Anchorage
Media availability			
Cable TV in community	74.6%	73.6%	92.8%
Community has newspaper	63.8%	93.3%	99.5%
TV, Radio use			
Subscribe to cable	55.1%	38.8%	57.9%
Hours watched previous day (avg. for subscribers)	3.1	2.2	2.8
Hours watched TV excluding cable (avg.)	2.5	1.7	1.9
Watched mostly RATNET (avg. for viewers)	55.1%	1.8%	0
Have VCR	84.3%	84.8%	84.1%
Hours listened to radio previous day (avg.)	1.5	2.0	2.2
Newspaper use**			
Looked at most recent issue of newspaper (% of all R's.)	47.2%	53.4%	64.1%
Time spent with issue (avg. minutes for readers)	29	31	39
Read other papers regularly	66.1%	38.8%	25.1%
Other paper is Anchorage	53.6%	72.4%	55.1%
Other paper is out-of-state	2.4%	7.2%	20.4%
Number of respondents	127	178	195

*Fairbanks, Juneau, Sitka, Ketchikan, Wrangell-St. Petersburg, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the Kenai Peninsula.

**Weeklies or bi-weeklies for rural areas, five- or six-day-a-week dailies for small urban areas, a choice of two dailies for Anchorage.

of time watching it. Rural residents spent the most time watching broadcast TV; and more than half of them watched the RATNET channel which is not available in Anchorage. So far, the pattern is as might be expected. But TV use in the small urban areas is quite different from that in either Anchorage or rural areas. Fewer respondents in small urban areas subscribed to cable and those who did spent less time watching it. They also spent the least amount of time watching TV the previous day.

As Table 2 shows, the media preferences of rural Alaskans for information about state government are quite different from those of Anchorage respondents. While newspapers were the first choice of Anchorage residents and, by a much smaller margin, of residents of small urban areas, television was preferred by rural Alaskans. Rural Alaskans and those from small urban areas were also more likely to prefer radio as a source of that type of information. The same rankings of these media were observed for Anchorage residents and rural Alaskans in a 1986 study (Pearson, 1990, p. 106), adding support to the finding that the perceived functions of these media are different and indicating that these differences have persisted over time.

There is evidence here then of three patterns of media use. Rural media use differs from metropolitan media use in expected ways. Media use in the smaller urban areas is distinct from that in both these areas -- but it does not fall midway between the other patterns. It has its own distinct form, indicating that communication is taking place in different ways in these communities than in the others.

So which Alaskans are best informed?

Alaskans and the Persian Gulf

Consistent with a simple media diversity equals information richness hypothesis, Anchorage respondents did better than rural respondents at identifying figures prominent in news accounts of the Persian Gulf war (Table 3). A number of respondents, as they tried to recall the names, made comments that provided clues as to how they thought of the various figures. These comments were also indicators of which media they were getting their information from. Four of the five people who commented about John Cheney, for example, indicated they'd seen him on TV by making statements like, "See his face; can't remember," "See him standing here," and "man with crooked neck." Only one made a remark hinting at substantive issues: "I really like the guy who is doing it now." All 12 of the people who made comments about Yitzhak Shamir provided visual descriptions. The descriptions, however, didn't agree. He's either a "little, short guy with dark hair," "gray headed short dude," or

Table 2

Medium Preferred for State Government Information by Place of Residence

	Rural	Small Urban	Anchorage
Newspapers	32.3%	43.3%	61%
Television	41.7	28.7	26.2
Radio	15.0	17.4	4.1
Friends	7.9	7.9	4.6
Mail	1.6	2.8	3.1
Other	1.6	0	1
Number of respondents	127	178	195

Table 3

Ability to Name Persian Gulf Figures by Place of Residence

	Rural	Small Urban	Anchorage
Ruler of Iraq (Saddam Hussein)	81.1%	93.8%	90.8%
Identified at least 3 of 7 public figures in Persian Gulf War	44.1	46.1	51.8
Identified 3 diplomats	7.1	7.3	11.3
Identified 3 information sources on military developments	11.8	10.7	16.9
CNN Baghdad reporter	25.2	19.1	26.2
General Schwarzkopf)	44.9	39.9	48.2
Defense secretary	25.2	37.6	40.5
Number of respondents	127	178	195

a "little, bald-headed guy." Remarks about Javier Perez de Cuellar focused on his name and nationality, with only three of 18 respondents making remarks indicating they had seen him on TV. Of 31 people who commented on H. Norman Schwarzkopf, 9 remarked on his appearance and 22 remarked on his name. One of those who referred to his name said, "I just heard it a little bit ago."

Given that rural respondents were more dependent on television for information about the war than were the other respondents, it might be expected that they would do as well as urban Alaskans in identifying the Persian Gulf figures most visible on television. Those were the people providing information about the military situation: John Cheney, H. Norman Schwarzkopf and CNN's front-line reporters in Baghdad. Rural Alaskans did as well in naming the CNN reporters, nearly as well in naming Schwarzkopf but significantly less well in naming Cheney.

Nor did they do as well in naming figures involved in diplomatic activity. Fewer respondents in all three sub-samples were able to identify Yitzhak Shamir, Javier Perez de Cuellar; or James Baker but, again, Anchorage respondents did best.

Amount of time spent with the media did make more of a difference for rural Alaskans than it did for Anchorage residents. Low but significant correlations were found for radio use and reading of other newspapers for rural Alaskans but not for small urban or Anchorage respondents (See Table 4). No relationship was found between time spent watching cable TV the previous day and Desert Storm knowledge, and a small but significant negative relationship was found for rural Alaskans watching broadcast TV. This is consistent with the accepted

Table 4

Ability to Name Figures in Persian Gulf Correlated With Time Spent With Media

	Rural	Small Urban	Anchorage
Hours watching broadcast TV	-.175 (N=126) (Sig. .05)	-.102 (N=178) (NS)	-.042 (N=195) (NS)
Hours watching cable TV	- .037 (N=69) (NS)	.15 (N=69) (NS)	-.063 (N=112) (NS)
Hours listening to radio	.201 (N=127) (Sig. 02)	-.027 (N=178) (NS)	-.122 (N=195) (Sig. 09)
Minutes reading newspaper	-.036 (N=60) (NS)	.001 (N=95) (NS)	.087 (N=124) (NS)
Read other papers regularly	.156 (N=127) (Sig. .08)	.174 (N=178) (Sig. .02)	.087 (N=195) (NS)

Pearson's *r*, two-tailed significance test. Positive correlations indicate number of Persian Gulf figures correctly identified increased with amount of time spent with medium..

Table 5

Ability to Name Figures in Persian Gulf Correlated With Perceived Usefulness of Media for Surveillance

	Rural	Small Urban	Anchorage
Television	.139 (N=125) (NS)	.018 (N=174) (NS)	.202 (N=194) (Sig. .005))
Radio	.099 (N=114) (NS)	.01 (N=172) (NS)	.105 (N=192) (NS)
Newspaper	.122 (N=125) (NS)	.098 (N=175) (NS)	.20 (N=193) (Sig. 004)
Friends	.065 (N=126) (NS)	.28 (N=178) (Sig. .000))	.084 (N=195) (NS)

Pearson's *r*, two-tailed significance test. Positive correlations indicate number of Persian Gulf figures correctly identified increased with perceptions of medium's usefulness.

wisdom, supported by research, that television is primarily an entertainment medium. Reading other newspapers was related to knowledge for respondents from small urban areas.[1]

Among the respondents who used the media purposefully, the only significant correlations with Desert Storm knowledge were for Anchorage residents (Table 5). This suggests that it is helpful to be a discriminating user of the media in a media-rich environment, but it clouds the picture of exactly what is going on in the media-poor environment. If increased use of some media is helpful there, why isn't more purposeful use of media?

Controlling for education is informative. Many studies have found that education and TV viewing are inversely correlated. However, purposeful use of television to get information is a special use of television that could be positively correlated with education. Thus education could well be a confounding variable. Another complication in comparing rural Alaskans and Anchorage residents if education is a factor is that rural Alaskans on average have fewer years of education than their Anchorage counterparts (While 67.7 percent of Anchorage respondents had more than 12 years of education, only 52 percent of the rural respondents had. In the small urban areas, 59 percent of the respondents had more than 12 years of education.) A partial correlation analysis controlling for education did find a significant relationship between rural Alaskans' use of television for surveillance and their ability to identify Desert Storm figures (partial correlation coefficient of .193, significant at p.<.02).

---

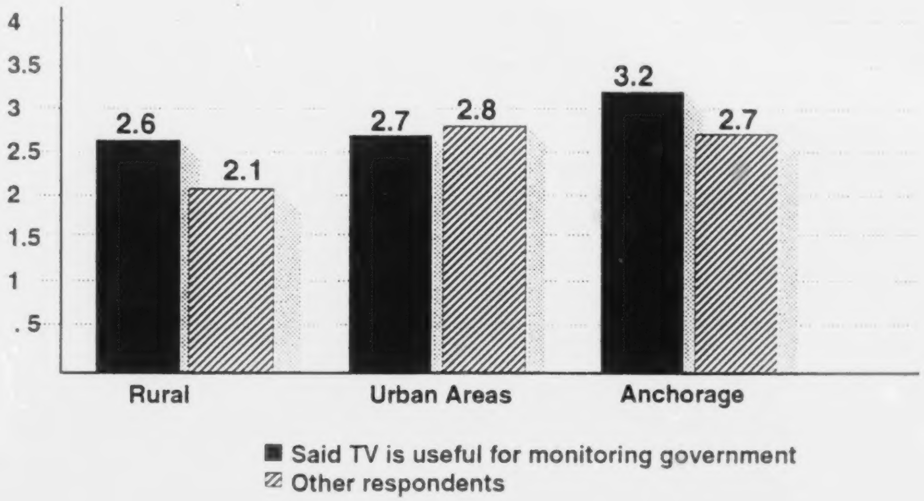
[1] Similarly, Tichenor, Olien and Donohue found that individuals in small communities who read metro dailies generally had higher levels of knowledge of local and regional issues than did others in their communities (1987).

While purposeful use of the media did not help respondents from the small urban areas either, talking to their friends did -- it appears that the two-step flow of information identified so long ago by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1948) can continue to contribute to explanations of the diffusion of information. And just as Bogart (1955) found that reading newspaper comic strips aided the social intercourse of men in a low-income neighborhood, keeping abreast of developments in the Persian Gulf may have aided the social intercourse of small-town Alaskans.

How much more did the respondents who used the available media purposefully know than other Alaskans? As Table 6 shows, rural Alaskans and Anchorage respondents who agreed television was useful for surveillance of the environment did significantly better than other respondents from their areas at recalling the names of Persian Gulf figures. However, the rural respondents who used the media purposefully did not do nearly as well as the Anchorage respondents who did. The scores of the purposeful rural users were comparable

Table 6

Number of Persian Gulf Figures Named by Use of TV for Surveillance of Environment



	TV useful	Other	t Value	Sig.
Rural	2.6 (N=80)	2.1 (N=45)	1.52	.07
Small Urban	2.7 (N=98)	2.8 (N=76)	-.33	NS
Anchorage	3.2 (N=102)	2.7 (N=92)	1.75	.04

by Use of Friends for Surveillance of Environment

	Friends useful	Other	t Value	Sig.
Small Urban	3.2 (N=57)	2.5 (N=121)	2.21	.02

(T-test values are one-tailed probabilities.)

Table 7

Ability to Name Figures in Persian Gulf Correlated With Measures of Integration

	Rural	Small Urban	Anchorage
Length of residence	.173 (N=127) (Sig. .05)	.033 (N=178) (NS)	.-.077 (N=195) (NS))
Belong to organizations	.158 (N=114) (Sig. .08))	.161 (N=178) (Sig. .03))	.107 (N=195) (NS)
Voted in last election	.23 (N=127) (Sig. .01)	.309 (N=177) (Sig. .000)	.24 (N=195) (Sig. .001)
Political activity	.172 (N=126) (Sig. .05)	.174 (N=178) (Sig. .02)	.145 (N=193) (Sig. .04)

Pearson's *r*, two-tailed significance test. Positive correlations indicate number of Persian Gulf figures correctly identified increased with length of residence/amount of political activity.

to those of the Anchorage respondents who did not use television purposefully. In the small urban areas, those respondents who used friends in their surveillance of the environment also did significantly better than other respondents from their communities. They recalled as many names as did the Anchorage television users. (There relationship between use of friends and recall was not significant for rural or Anchorage respondents.)

Four community integration variables were found to be related to the Desert Storm questions. Length of residence, a somewhat cruder measure than that used by Stamm, was found to be related only for rural respondents. The variable most strongly related to Desert Storm knowledge for all three sub-samples was voting in the state election the previous fall (Table 7).

Consistent with the knowledge gap hypothesis, education was found to be strongly related to the Desert Storm question for all three sub-samples (Table 8).

Table 8

Ability to Name Figures in Persian Gulf Correlated With Education

	Rural	Small Urban	Anchorage
Education	.394 (N=127) (Sig. .000)	.367 (N=178) (Sig. .000))	.362 (N=195) (Sig. .000)

Pearson's *r*, two-tailed significance test. Positive correlations indicate number of Persian Gulf figures correctly identified increased with number of years of education.

Table 9

Stepwise Regression for Identification of Figures in Persian Gulf War

	Beta	sig.*	mult. R	adjusted R^2	overall F
Rural					
Education	.41	.000	.38	.14	20.62**
TV for surveillance	-.17	.05	.42	.16	12.61**
Small Urban					
Education	.37	.000	.37	.13	26.84**
Voted in last state election	-.24	.001	.44	.18	19.67**
Friends for surveillance	-.16	.03	.46	.20	15.07**
Anchorage					
Education	.35	.000	.35	.13	26.93**
TV for surveillance	-.20	.003	.41	.16	18.72**
Voted in last state election	-.15	.03	.43	.18	14.38**

*p<.05 was the criterion for inclusion of independent variables.

**p<.001

A final, stepwise regression analysis was conducted to see what combination of variables could best predict identification of Desert Storm figures (Table 9). As the earlier correlation analyses would suggest, education was the best individual predictor for all three sub-samples. Use of television for surveillance was the only other variable admitted to the regression equation for the rural Alaskans. It was also the second variable admitted for Anchorage respondents. Use of friends for surveillance was admitted as the third variable for small urban area respondents. Voting in the most recent state election was also admitted to the equation for small urban and Anchorage respondents.

The regression results provide support for knowledge gap, uses and gratifications, and community integration views of media uses.

Conclusion

The richness of the media environment in Anchorage appears to have made it relatively easy even for respondents who were not particularly attentive to the media to identify Persian Gulf figures. The Persian Gulf war was a subject of great public interest, extensively covered in all the media (though not all the media channels) available in Anchorage. There was considerable redundancy in the information available in this media-rich environment, and this redundancy apparently deserves the credit for a relatively high overall level of information among the Anchorage respondents.

While the media environment in the smaller urban areas was less rich, community structures which encouraged face-to-face communication and the reliance of some on metropolitan newspapers as an information source appear to have compensated for this. A closer examination of information diffusion in these communities might well have found that people were following developments in the war at least in part so that they could discuss this subject of the day more intelligently with their friends.

In rural Alaska, however, both media redundancy and easily accessible friends are lacking. As one rural respondent said, "In our way of life here, there's not much involvement with friends or events."

The rural respondents, on average, did not do as well as other Alaskans. Those who used television purposefully for surveillance of their environment appear to have been more successful at getting information about the war, but they did not do as well as those who sought out information in either the small urban areas or Anchorage.

Education, as many knowledge gap studies have found, was the factor most strongly related to Desert Storm recall for all three respondent groups. The original knowledge gap hypothesis was concerned with the widening of knowledge gaps on science issues over time. But it appears that even for subjects of as general interest as the Persian Gulf war educational differences can contribute to the emergence of knowledge gaps.

Voting behavior proved the most strongly related of the community integration variables to Desert Storm recall. This finding does suggest a link between community integration and interest in distant events.

The picture that emerges from an examination of Alaskans attempting to monitor the Persian Gulf war is one in which media structure and individual factors both played a significant role. It appears both can contribute significantly to knowledge gaps. It also appears that being media poor is roughly equivalent to being information poor when the information at issue is about a major news event such as the Persian Gulf war.

References

Berelson, Bernard. "What 'Missing the Newspaper' Means." In *Communications Research 1948-49*, pp. 111-129. Edited by Paul Lazarsfeld and Frank Stanton. New York: Harper, 1949; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1979.

Bogart, Leo. "Adult Talk About Newspaper Comics." *American Journal of Sociology* 61 (1955): 26-30.

Cohen, Akiba A. "People Without Media: Attitudes and Behavior During a General Media Strike." *Journal of Broadcasting* 25 (Spring 1981): 171-180.

de Bock, Harold. "Gratification Frustration During a Newspaper Strike and a TV Blackout." *Journalism Quarterly* 57 (Spring 1980): 61-66, 78.

Elliott, William R., and Rosenberg, William L. "The 1985 Philadelphia Newspaper Strike: A Uses and Gratifications Study." *Journalism Quarterly* 64 (Winter 1987): 679-687.

Gaziano, Cecilie. "The Knowledge Gap: An Analytical Review of Media Effects." Paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Athens, Ohio, July 1982.

________. "Mass Communication and Class Communication." *Mass Comm Review* 16 (1989): 29-38.

Herzog, Herta. "Motivations and Gratifications of Daily Serial Listeners." In *Radio Research, 1942-1943*. Edited by Paul Lazarsfeld and Frank Stanton. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944. Reprinted in *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication*. pp. 50-55. Edited by Wilbur Schramm. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955.

Katz, Elihu; Gurevitch, Michael; and Haas, H. "On the Use of Mass Media for Important Things." *American Sociological Review* 38 (April 1973): 164-181.

Kimball, Penn. "People Without Papers." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 23 (1959): 389-398.

Lain, Laurence B. "Steps Toward A Comprehensive Model Of Newspaper Readership." *Journalism Quarterly* 63 (Spring 1986): 69-74, 121.

Lasswell, Harold D. "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society." In *The Communication of Ideas*, pp. 37-51. Edited by Lyman Bryson. New York: Harper & Row, 1948; reprint ed., New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1964.

Lazarsfeld, Paul; Bernard Berelson; and Hazel Gaudet. *The People's Choice*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1948.

Lazarsfeld, Paul F., and Patricia L. Kendall. *Radio Listening in America*. New York: Arno Press, 1948; reprint ed., 1979.

Lometti, Guy E.; Reeves, Byron; and Bybee, Carl R. "Investigating the Assumptions of Uses and Gratifications Research." *Communication Research* 4 (1977): 321-338.

McLeod, Jack M.; Bybee, Carl R.; and Durall, Jean A. "Evaluating Media Performance by Gratifications Sought and Received." *Journalism Quarterly* 59 (Spring 1982): 3-12, 59.

Olien, Clarice N.; Donohue, George A.; and Tichenor, Phillip J. "Community Structure and Media Use." In *Mass Communication Review Yearbook,* vol. 1, pp. 390-400. Edited by G. Cleveland Wilhoit; Harold de Bock, associate editor. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980.

Palmgreen, Philip; Wenner, Lawrence A.; and Rayburn, J.D. II. "Gratification Discrepancies and News Program Choice." *Communication Research* 8 (October 1981): 451-478 .

________. "Uses and Gratifications and Exposure to Public Television: A Discrepancy Approach," *Communication Research* 6 (April 1979): 155-180.

Pearson, Larry L."Media-Rich, Media-Poor: Knowledge Gaps and Communication Policy in Alaska," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1990.

Rubin, Alan M., and Perse, Elizabeth M. "Audience Activity and Television News Gratifications." *Communication Research* 14 (February 1987): 58-84.

Shoemaker, Pamela J.: Schooler, Caroline; and Danielson, Wayne A. "Involvement With the Media: Recall Versus Recognition of Election Information." *Communication Research* 16 (February 1989): 78-103.

Stamm, Keith R., and Fortini-Campbell, Lisa. "The Relationship of Community Ties To Newspaper Use." *Journalism Monographs* 84 (August 1983).

Stamm, Keith R., and Weis, Robert J. "Toward a Dynamic Theory of Newspaper Subscribing." *Journalism Quarterly* 59 (Autumn 1982): 382-389.

Tichenor, Phillip J.; Olien, Clarice N.; and Donohue, George A. "Effect of Use of Metro Dailies on Knowledge Gap in Small Towns." *Journalism Quarterly* 64 (Summer-Autumn 1987): 329-336.

________. "Mass Media Flow and Differential Growth in Knowledge." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 34 (1970): 159-170.

Weaver, David H., and Buddenbaum, Judith M. "Newspapers and Television: A Review of Research on Uses and Effects." In *Mass Communication Review Yearbook,* vol. 1, pp. 371-380. Edited by G. Cleveland Wilhoit; Harold de Bock, associate editor. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980.

Windahl, Sven. "Uses and Gratifications at the Crossroads." In *Mass Communication Review Yearbook,* vol. 2, pp. 174-185. Edited by G. Cleveland Wilhoitt; associate editor, Harold de Bock. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981.

Windahl, Sven; Höjerback, Ingrid; and Hedinsson, Elias. "Adolescents without Television: A Study in Media Deprivation." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 3 (Winter 1986): 47-63.

Wright, Charles R. "Functional Analysis and Mass Communication Revisited." In *The Uses of Mass Communications, Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research*, pp. 197-212. Edited by Jay G. Blumler and Elihu Katz. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1974.

NEWS MEDIA IN THE PERSIAN GULF WAR:
INCREASED USE AND LEARNING EFFECTS

Zhongdang Pan

The Annenberg School for Communication
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Ronald E. Ostman

Patricia Moy

Paula Reynolds

Department of Communication
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853

Paper presented to the Mass Communication and Society Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication annual conference, Boston, MA, August, 1991.

News Media in the Persian Gulf War:
Increased Use and Learning Effects

by

Zhongdang Pan
Ronald E. Ostman
Patricia Moy
Paula Reynolds

ABSTRACT

Based on 607 interviews conducted from one to 10 days after the Persian Gulf War was suspended, this study examined the informational performance of news media during the war. In a comparison of levels of news media exposure during periods of war and and peace, significant increases in exposure were found across all media channels during the war. Exposure to newspapers, cable TV, and/or PBS news coverage was positively related to levels of war knowledge. There was some indication that the news media, particularly CNN, might have functioned to level off the potential differential knowledge acquisition associated with education. Newspaper exposure was more strongly related to gaining knowledge in different areas; exposure to cable and PBS coverage was more strongly related to knowing about the reporter pooling system and the name of the Iraqi elite troops. Although television was cited by most people as their first most important source for information about the war, no significant relationships were found between exposure to network news and levels of knowledge. However, early general conclusions about the inefficiency of television in disseminating information must be qualified based upon the empirical findings about the effects of watching CNN and PBS.

NEWS MEDIA IN THE PERSIAN GULF WAR: INCREASED USE AND LEARNING EFFECTS

The Persian Gulf War has presented yet another context in which to examine the information functions of news media in a democratic society. With more than 800 reporters from around the world gathered in Saudi Arabia presenting live coverage of the war, the extent of news media operations was unprecedented. While playing a central role in Americans' lives during the Persian Gulf War, news media came under heavy attack from critics armed with ideological weaponry and empirical data, accusing media of failing to fulfill their main function in a democracy -- disseminating crucial information to the American public (*e.g.*, Jhally, Lewis, and Morgan, 1991).

This study examines empirical evidence of the learning effects of news media exposure; it addresses the linkage between exposure to news media and levels of factual knowledge about the Gulf War. This linkage has been a main topic of empirical investigation in different settings for many years (*e.g.*, Wade and Schramm, 1969; Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien, 1970; Berry, 1983; Robinson and Levy, 1986; Neuman, 1986; Graber, 1988). However, due to some unique characteristics of the war, further investigation of learning effects during the Gulf War may present additional insights into the process of learning from news media.

First, the Gulf War represented a major social conflict of an international scale. The U.S. committed its largest military force (since Vietnam) in a region far away from American territory. Given the nature of the conflict and the bitter memory of the last U.S. military involvement in a foreign country, the Gulf War was a high involvement issue. Meanwhile, the physical distance of the war from people's personal lives meant that to most Americans, even those who had direct personal relations with deployed troops, the news media were the sole source for information about the war.

Second, the Gulf War was also the first war fought in an environment of diverse news media channels. Although the traditionally dominant television networks, newspapers, and news magazines did not diminish in importance, cable TV, especially Cable Network News, rose to international prominence by bringing constant news flow and live coverage of the war (Goodman, 1991; Kamen, 1991; Zoglin, 1991).

These conditions provided opportunities to examine not only the extent of news media exposure during the war and the corresponding learning effects of such exposure, but also the extent of informational performance by various media channels.

Media Dependency and Information Acquisition

A useful theoretical model guiding the present investigation is the "dependency model of media effects" (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976; Ball-Rokeach, 1985; Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, and Grube, 1984). This model posits that under conditions of social change and conflict, people in complex societies will tend to become more dependent than ever upon mass media for information. The greater its dependency upon the media, the more likely the audience will be affected by the media. This phenomenon has been noted particularly in times of war (Jhally *et al.*, 1991; Dotan and Cohen, 1976).

In Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's formulation of the media dependency model, macro structural and systemic factors play an important role in the relationship between media audience, use of media content, and subsequent effects. As a sub-system in a tripartite system involving audience, media, and society, mass media are uniquely situated, serving the functions of information dissemination under recognizable structural constraints. For example, the mass media have "structural access" to experts in military institutions and on the battlefield. The media have resources to create and gather military information, to translate expert military language into everyday parlance, to effectively process information and transform it into appropriate messages, and to quickly disseminate messages. The media and the military, therefore, have a lot of control over what will and what will not be in the message environment.[1] Individuals in complex societies do not for the most part have such access or resources; therefore, they may become dependent upon the media to meet their needs for information, understanding, and assurance (see Dotan and Cohen, 1976).[2] "Dependence," accordingly, is defined by Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) as "a relationship in which the satisfaction of needs or the attainment of goals by one party is contingent upon the resources of another party" (p. 6). Individuals' recognition and articulation of their desired goals and their perceived information utility become the psychological mechanisms for message exposure.

Although the original formulation was stated in macro systemic terms, subsequent writing focuses more on "the individual" as the unit of analysis, in part due to the realization that "the audience" does not respond in a uniform, undifferentiated manner to media (Ball-Rokeach, 1985; Ball-Rokeach *et al*., 1984). Following this line of thinking, many later empirical studies focused on comparing relative contributions of relying on newspaper or television (*e.g.*, Becker and Whitney, 1980; Miller and Reese, 1982; Miyo, 1983).

Becker and Whitney (1980) found that newspaper dependency tended to relate to higher levels of local and world news knowledge than did television dependency, even after controlling for age and education. They pointed to factors such as differences in message formats between media and audience abilities to process information presented with different formats. Based upon their findings, Becker and Whitney warned of the dangers of television dependency, a tendency more likely to be observed among less educated individuals, and one exacerbating their disadvantageous positions in information gain.

Miller and Reese (1982) formulated an interaction effect of reported news medium reliance as distinguished from general media reliance formulated by Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976), based upon the assumption that the most relied-upon medium better suits the individual's information needs and information processing abilities. They reported significant positive interaction effects of reliance on a medium (newspaper or television) and exposure to that medium on political efficacy and activity. In other words, those who considered themselves relying upon one particular medium were more likely affected by every unit of increase in their exposure to that medium.

In a study conducted in Israel, Cohen, Adoni, and Drori (1983) examined the effects of media dependency on perceived social reality. They found that direct personal life experience was an important conditional factor. To the extent that news reports of social conflicts concerned people, situations, and circumstances personally experienced by an individual, increased media dependency was associated with greater willingness to accept the media's account of the news events as reality.

Still, effects of media dependency on learning from news media have been among those topics that are more intensively studied. Robinson and Levy (1986) observed that print media might be more effective than television at fostering knowledge acquisition. However, television, compared with newspapers, seemed to be more effective information vehicle for less-educated people. Miyo (1983) analyzed three-wave panel data collected during and after a political campaign and found that although both high newspaper and television reliance were related to higher levels of political knowledge across all time points, newspaper consistently scored better than television in affecting knowledge acquisition. Especially interesting was her finding that high newspaper dependency was associated with much less information loss one year after the campaign than high television dependency. Given that information loss has been an important factor that might account for low levels of learning about public affairs or not remembering news information (Zaller and Price, 1990; Gunter, 1986), this piece of evidence points to one possible mechanism that might be responsible for the consistently higher informational performance by newspapers.

Based upon this body of literature, this study examines three closely related research questions, developed to assess the news media's informational performance during the Gulf War:

First, what was the level of news media exposure during the Gulf War, compared with a "normal period"? Derived from the media dependency theory, a significant increase in news media exposure during the war, especially television news viewing, was hypothesized.

Second, to what extent was news media exposure related to levels of knowledge about the Gulf War? Considering the fact that most Americans, even those who had acquaintances, friends, and families stationed in the Gulf, could not possibly experience the war directly, individuals were expected to enhance their dependency upon mass media messages concerning the war and the potential effects of such messages were expected to increase. The situation helps increase our confidence in the causal direction of the relationship from news media exposure to levels of knowledge, because much of the information measured was not made available until the U.S. military buildup or the start of the war.

Third, are there any differences among the diverse media channels in conveying different types of information concerning the war? During the course of the Gulf war, television, especially CNN, transmitted images of Patriot missiles intercepting Iraqi Scud missiles, smart bombs hitting enemy targets with pinpoint accuracy, mass-surrendered Iraqi soldiers, *etc*. The visual dominance of television poses the question of whether television was more effective in conveying the information associated with such dramatic images. This possibility was implicitly proposed in some early dependency studies (*e.g.*, Becker and Whitney, 1980; Miyo, 1983) as a possible explanation of the differential informational role of television and newspaper. However, it was not subject to empirical test. The present study examines this issue empirically.

Methods

Data

The main body of the data analyzed came from a telephone survey conducted March 1 to 10 in Central New York State. A variant of random digit dialing was used to draw the sample. With four telephone directories from this region comprising the sampling frame, telephone numbers were drawn systematically. A constant was then added to the last digit to compensate for unlisted numbers. At each household contacted, a male or female respondent was interviewed randomly, depending on whether the last digit of the telephone number was odd or even. In households with residents of only one gender, the person with the last birthday was asked to participate in the survey. Specific callback procedures were implemented to reach hard-to-reach respondents.

Interviewers were trained advanced undergraduates in a survey research methods course. At the questionnaire development stage, focus groups were conducted to explore topics of concern about the Gulf War. The survey instrument was pre-tested the last week of February among members of the study population, and revised. Six hundred ten interviews were completed in March, resulting in a response rate of 66%, of which 607 were valid.

To assess changes in news media exposure, data from the 1989 pilot study of the National Election Study were examined. This study was based on telephone interviews with 614 randomly selected individuals who had participated in both the 1988 NES pre- and post-test studies. These interviews were conducted between July 6 and August 1, 1989. Among the selected individuals, 494 respondents were re-interviewed between September 6 and October 6. The data used for comparison purposes here came primarily from the first interview; a few measures came from the second interview (see Appendix A). For detailed descriptions of sampling and interviewing procedures, see Miller and National Election Studies (1990).

Measures

News Media Exposure. Respondents were asked to report the extent to which they were exposed to newspapers, television, and radio. For newspapers, respondents were first asked how many days a week they read a newspaper. Those who reported reading a newspaper were then asked how often they read each of the following types of news in the newspaper(s): Gulf War news, other international news, editorials on the Gulf War, letters to the editor about the Gulf War, national news, and local news. A 1-to-10 scale was provided, where 1 meant "rarely" and 10 meant "very often." Respondents who did not read a particular type of news were asked to indicate this and "do not read" was coded into zero.

Television news exposure was measured by asking respondents if they watched TV news. Those who responded "yes" were then asked how often they watched certain TV news programming. Such programming included: network evening news, local evening news, CNN, C-SPAN, MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour on PBS, and news interview shows. The 1-to-10 scale used for newspapers was again employed for television.

Radio news exposure measures paralleled those of television news exposure. Respondents who reported listening to radio news then reported how often they listened to radio news briefs, National Public Radio news, and news talk shows on the same 1-to-10 scale.

All missing values for the above media exposure measures were replaced by sample means before analysis.

Separate items were used to measure media reliance. Respondents were asked their first and second most-used sources of information on the Gulf War. The choices which were provided included newspapers, television, radio, magazines, family and friends, or some other source.

Knowledge. Respondents were asked to supply answers to four knowledge items: (1) the name of the missiles that the U.S. military used to shoot down Iraqi Scud missiles (Patriot missiles), (2) the action the U.N. resolution required Iraq to take (an unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait), (3) how the U.S. military maintained control over reporters in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait (pooling), and (4) the name given to the elite Iraqi troops (Republican Guard).

Correct answers were coded "1." Incorrect or no answers were coded "0." Correct answers were summed to create a knowledge index ranging from 0 to 4. The index has a reliability coefficient of .63 as measured by Cronbach's alpha.

Demographics. Five demographic variables were included for analyses: age, gender, education, occupation, and household income.

Age. Respondents were asked how old they were on their last birthday. Missing values were replaced by sample means.

Gender. Interviewers, at the end of the interview, indicated whether the respondent was male or female.

Education. Respondents were first asked whether or not they were a high school graduate. If respondents had not finished high school, they were asked how many years of school they completed. If respondents had graduated from high school, they were asked how many years of school after high school they completed. Responses to the questions were recoded into total years of school. Non-integral responses were coded upwards to compensate for those respondents who were currently in college or had completed half a year of formal schooling after high school.

Occupation. Respondents were asked if they were currently employed. Respondents who were currently employed were asked their occupation. Respondents who were not currently employed, were homemakers, or were students were asked if they had ever held a full-time job for pay for at least six months. Those who had were asked for that previous occupation. Coding of occupations consisted of converting each occupational title into Duncan's socioeconomic index (SEI) score, most recently developed based upon the 1980 Census Occupation codes (Stevens and Cho, 1985). This new SEI differed from previous versions in that it was built upon data of the total labor force rather than on males only.

Income. Interviewers read categories of total gross household income. Respondents were asked to inform the interviewer when the interviewer reached the category which included their last year's household income. Income was coded into categories with $10,000 increments.

Missing values for education, occupation, and income were replaced by predicted values estimated by regression models including all demographic variables except for the one whose missing values were to be replaced. For instance, missing values of education were obtained from a regression model including occupation, income, age, and gender as predictors.

Analysis

To estimate the extent of changes in news media exposure and differential changes across various media, mean comparisons of news media exposure variables were conducted between the two samples. Because the two samples varied slightly in question wording and in scales (see Appendix A), some data manipulation was necessary. For most of the news media exposure measures involving different scales between the two samples, comparisons were made primarily between proportions of people reporting some exposure. For some news media exposure measures, different constants were multiplied to the original scores within each sample to give an equal range to the comparable scales between the two samples. But still, the variations in question wordings and scales remain possible rival explanations for the differences observed (see Schuman and Presser, 1981).

Following an examination of descriptive statistics of the news media exposure, the analysis focused on the local sample. A factor analysis of news media measures was conducted and four news media exposure indices were created based on factor analysis results (see Appendix B): reading newspaper, watching network TV, watching cable TV and PBS MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour, and listening to radio news. Hierarchical regression models were fitted to the data to predict levels of knowledge about the Gulf War. In addition, the Cable/PBS watching index was decomposed into its individual components, and each component was used to replace the overall index in the regression model to obtain evidence of each specific channel's contribution to the knowledge measured.

Finally, a series of logit regression models were fitted to the data, using each of the four knowledge items as the dichotomous dependent variable. The model fitted was:

$$\log [p_1/(1-p_1)] = \alpha + \Sigma \beta_i x_i + \mu$$

where, p_1 = probability of getting the correct answer to a knowledge item, and x_i represents the ith independent variable.

The model assumed that right or wrong answers form discrete categories and individuals responding to each knowledge item can be approximated as a process of individual choice between two equally appealing options (see Maddala, 1983; Schmidt and Strauss, 1975). The expected effects of the independent variables were operationally defined as the corresponding deviations in the probability of choosing one option from that expected by chance. Based upon the assumption of each item serving as a proxy of a specific domain of knowledge related to the Gulf War, the model might provide some insights into what kinds of things people had learned from a particular medium.

Results

News Media Exposure during the War

Mean comparisons of news media exposure measures between the local and national samples are shown in Table 1. Ten of the 14 comparisons show differences in the predicted direction -- increased news media exposure during the War -- and nine of the ten are significant. On average, people increased their frequency of newspaper reading by half a day per week. The war might also have drawn an additional 3% audience to TV news. Among TV news watchers, the amount of exposure to network evening news also increased significantly. Over 18% more people reported reading a news magazine during the war, compared with the 1989 data. The remarkable increase in news media exposure was shown by the proportion of people who reported watching or listening to the otherwise non-dominant media channels: CNN showed nearly a 35% increase in viewers, nearly a 30% increase for C-

SPAN, over 32% for MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour on PBS, and nearly a 30% increase for National Public Radio news.

The four comparisons showing an opposite pattern involve the three newspaper reading items and one on listening to radio news briefs. With regard to the three newspaper reading items, one possible explanation for the unexpected result is the effect of the different scales involved. While "never read," coded as zero, was not provided as a legitimate category in the local survey, in the NES survey it was part of the four-point scale, ranging from "never read," coded as 1, to "read frequently," coded as 4. It has been shown that when a response option is offered as a legitimate choice, it is more likely to be chosen by respondents than when the option is only implicit (Schuman and Presser, 1981). The true anomaly here is the item involving radio news briefs. One possible explanation might be a replacement effect: people may have kept themselves informed with an almost constant news flow on CNN or on NPR, both of which enjoyed very high increases of audiences.

Table 2 shows proportions of people choosing each medium as "the most used source for information about the Gulf War." Television clearly dominated; more than 79% of the people chose it as the first "most used source." However, the role of newspapers was no less important. Although fewer than 12% chose it as their first "most used source," newspapers were mentioned by more than 55% of the people as their second "most used source." In addition, among those who chose television as the first "most used source," more than 96% of them mentioned newspaper as the second "most used source." Compared with these two media, radio and magazines were considered much less significant for information among the majority of people, despite the increased listenership of NPR news and readership of news magazines shown in Table 1.

The general proposition of increased news media reliance by audience members during an intense social conflict may also be shown by the observation that more than 60% of the respondents reported an increase in their news media use. Nearly 47% of these respondents reported that their news media use "increased a lot."

News media exposure during war time varied among people with different demographic characteristics. Although education was significantly related to reading newspaper stories about the war ($r = .16, p < .01$), other international affairs ($r = .27, p < .01$) and national affairs ($r = .25, p < .01$), it was negatively related to exposure to network evening news ($r = -.11, p < .01$) and local evening news ($r = -.22, p <.01$). But education showed a significant positive relationship with watching CNN ($r = .15, p < .01$) and MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour ($r = .16, p < .01$). Education also was positively related to listening to National Public Radio news ($r = .20, p <.01$) and radio news briefs ($r = .10, p <.05$). Occupational prestige was more strongly related to watching MacNeil/Lehrer on PBS ($r = .21, p < .01$) than education and income. But income was more strongly related to watching CNN ($r = .24, p < .01$) than the other two socioeconomic status indicators. The data also show that knowing someone stationed in the Gulf was not related to higher levels of news media exposure. That is, levels of exposure to news media during the Gulf War were equally high among individuals with and without acquaintances, friends, or family members stationed in the Gulf.

Learning Effects of News Media Exposure during the War

The four knowledge items were designed to measure different aspects of the conduct of the war. A significant amount of learning occurred during the war, assuming that the information measured was not available before the U.S. military buildup in the region. Among the 607 respondents, more than 75% correctly identified Patriot missiles as the type of missile used by Allied forces to shoot down Iraqi Scud missiles, and more than 47% learned the name of the Iraqi elite troops -- Republican Guards. More than 66% learned that the key mandate of the UN resolutions called for an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. But only 18% of the respondents learned about the pooling system that the Pentagon used to manage reporters in Saudi Arabia covering the conflict. Overall, 13% of the respondents answered all four questions correctly, while more than 27% each answered correctly two and three questions respectively. Still, more than 13% of the respondents failed to provide a single correct answer to the four knowledge questions. The mean knowledge level is slightly above two items.

Table 3 shows the results of hierarchical regression analysis predicting levels of knowledge about the Gulf War. Consistent with the findings from various learning effects research (*e.g.*, Robinson and Levy, 1986), demographic variables together formed a significant block of predictors of knowledge. Together, the five demographic variables accounted for nearly 26% of the variance. Among them, education and occupational prestige scores were positively related to levels of knowledge about the War. Males and younger respondents also showed higher levels of knowledge about the War.

The four news media exposure indices accounted for a significant 4.1% of additional variance. Newspaper reading was the strongest predictor of knowledge among the four (ß = .18, p < .01), consistent with the findings of learning about public affairs information from previous studies (*e.g.*, Adams, 1981; Becker and Whitney, 1980; Miyo, 1983). The Cable/PBS exposure index also showed a significant predictive power (ß = .12, p < .01). Further detailed analysis of the components of the Cable/PBS exposure index showed that exposure to C-SPAN and MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour had robust effects (ß = .08 and .09, p < .05, respectively). Exposure to CNN failed to reach the conventional significance level, but the beta was in the predicted direction. It should be noted that the disaggregated analysis is more likely to be affected by measurement error. Therefore, the coefficients associated with each component of the Cable/PBS exposure index should be regarded as a conservative estimate of their effects.

In addition, Table 3 shows that the learning effects of news media exposure might not be spread evenly across people with different levels of education, which is often found to be related to interest in public affairs issues and the ability to learn from news media (Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien, 1970; Ettema and Kline, 1977; Genova and Greenberg, 1979; McLeod, Bybee, and Durall, 1979). Among the four news media exposure indices, three showed negative interactions with educational levels. Although none of them reached the .05 significance level, considering the possible attenuations resulting from measurement error and the consistent direction of the interaction coefficients, it is quite likely that people with lower levels of education might have learned the measured knowledge items at least as efficiently as those with higher levels of education. It is even possible that because of saturated media coverage of the War, combined with the widespread involvement in the issue among the general public, those with lower levels of education might have learned more from the same amount of news media exposure -- suggesting a possible narrowing of the knowledge gap. CNN seemed to stand out as a possible chief "information leveler" (Miyo, 1983) -- it is the only one that showed a significant interaction with education.

Further analysis (results not shown) did not reveal any significant relationship between the traditional medium reliance measure (citing newspaper or television as the most used source for information about the war) and knowledge level. This finding held in both equations where two dummy variables representing newspaper and television reliance were entered before and after the exposure indices. In addition, no significant interaction between reliance on a medium and exposure to the medium was found in predicting knowledge (*cf.*, Miller and Reese, 1982).

Decomposing the dependent variable into individual knowledge items provided further insight into the learning effects of news media exposure. The overall fitness statistics in Table 4 show that the models predicted successfully 9% to 15% of the total variance in the log probability of respondents providing a correct answer. In addition, the four news media indices added a significant portion of variance except for the case of learning that the key UN resolution called for an Iraqi withdrawal.[3]

As shown in Table 4, newspaper reading remains a significant predictor of the probability of correctly answering all four knowledge items.[4] Every unit of increase in newspaper reading corresponds to an increase of more than 22% in the likelihood of correctly linking shooting down Iraq's missiles to Patriot missiles. It also corresponds to an increase of more than 16% in the likelihood of knowing about "reporter pooling" as the system that the Pentagon used to accommodate reporters covering the war and the name of Iraqis' elite troops. The coefficient associated with newspaper reading in the equation predicting the likelihood of knowing the content of the key UN resolution did not reach the conventional significance level. However, considering measurement error, the 8% increase in likelihood of knowing about this associated with every unit of increase in newspaper reading should be a valid indication of newspaper reading effects.

Watching network TV news seemed to be related to an increased likelihood of learning about Patriot missile -- 6% of increase in probability -- despite the fact that the corresponding coefficient did not reach statistical significance. But watching network TV news was not related to learning about the content of the key UN resolution calling for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

Radio listening alone did not seem to lead to increased probability of learning any of the four knowledge items; three of the four corresponding coefficients were negative. Watching cable news and MacNeil/Lehrer news reports appeared to be a major vehicle for learning about the four knowledge items. Although only two of the four coefficients are statistically significant, they are all in the positive direction. The most robust effects of watching Cable/PBS appeared to be on the probability of learning about "reporter pooling" and the Republican Guard. Increased cable and PBS viewing corresponds to more than a 30% increase in the likelihood of learning about "reporter pooling" and more than a 10% increase in the likelihood of knowing the name of the "Republican Guard."

Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the patterns of news media exposure during the Gulf War and the learning effects of such exposure. Compared to a national sample, respondents in the local sample reported much higher levels of exposure to various news media. The results are consistent with respondents' self-assessment of increased news media use during the war. The evidence presented seems to suggest significant increases in exposure across the news media channels measured. Although television was cited as the first most important source for information about the war, newspapers retained their significant informational role. A particularly noticeable observation is the large increase in the proportions of people who reported watching CNN reports and listening to National Public Radio news. One possible interpretation might be the need for individuals to get up-to-date information about the progress of the war.

Given the increased exposure to almost all media channels, there is no evidence of exclusive reliance upon any one particular medium during the war, although it is possible that some individuals relied primarily upon one medium due to unique lifestyles and conditions. This interpretation of the data is further supported by evidence showing that most "TV reliant" people also read newspapers and considered newspapers as their second most used source. The evidence thus can be interpreted as an indirect support for the systemic notion of increased "media dependency" during an intense social conflict as formulated in the original media dependency model (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976). Anecdotal evidence also gave some support to this systemic dependency notion: at least during the initial period of the war, both the Pentagon and White House officials relied upon CNN for up-to-date reports of the situation in Baghdad.

However, the possible increase in news media exposure during the war was not evenly distributed. Greater news media exposure was skewed toward higher levels of education, occupational prestige, and income. Particularly noticeable was a greater increase in the proportion of people watching CNN and a significant positive correlation between income and watching CNN. The correlation was even higher than that between watching CNN and education. One possible interpretation is that access to CNN as an additional news source was much more constrained by economic capabilities.

This study also showed some evidence of uneven distribution of the knowledge about the war across various social sectors: those with higher levels of education, higher occupational prestige, and higher income tended to know more about the Gulf war. Levels of knowledge acquisition were also higher among younger males. Despite the high involvement nature of the war, learning about things related to the war was still stratified to a large extent by socioeconomic status, consistent with the very robust findings of inequality in knowledge distribution (Tichenor *et al.*, 1970; Gaziano, 1983).

The evidence presented in this study also supports the position taken by Robinson and Levy (1986). Although television was cited by a majority of people as the main source of information, in terms of learning effects of television news exposure, TV "should not be considered the public's main source of news" (p. 232). Newspapers were far more effective, compared with television, in linking to higher levels of knowledge about the war.

This general statement, however, needs to be qualified in light of the growing diversity of news media channels. The present study showed that exposure to cable news and the MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour was almost as strong as newspaper exposure in predicting levels of knowledge about the Gulf War. Although causal direction is somewhat ambiguous with cross-sectional survey data, two factors suggest learning effects of these television channels. One factor is that the effect remained significant after controlling for five demographic variables, suggesting that the effect is independent from the effect of those antecedent variables predicting both exposure and knowledge. The other factor is that the information measured by the knowledge items was, for most people, not available before the Gulf conflict, nor was it available in other more easily accessible information sources. By and large, the acquisition of this information had to be through news media channels. The other uncontrolled factor that might account for the results would be prior levels of knowledge (Zaller and Price, 1990; Robinson and Levy, 1986). But, in this case, prior knowledge might be more directly related to levels of news media exposure and the efficiency of learning from news media about the war. Higher prior levels of knowledge about general public affairs issues might help audience members comprehend and remember the information about the war presented by news media.

This study also presented some evidence showing a possible narrowing of the knowledge gap during the Gulf War. Exposure to CNN reports was particularly likely to result in greater learning among those with lower levels of education, given the same amount of exposure among the high and low educated people. One possible explanation might be the great redundancy in CNN reports and almost constant flow of news reports on that channel.

Given the nature of the data, two types of ceiling effects are hard to be separated: that imposed by the measurement instrument and that imposed by the structural availability of information (Ettema and Kline, 1977). But detailed inspection of the data suggest that the latter was more likely responsible for the negative interactions between news media exposure and education. The knowledge index had an approximated normal distribution with its mean near the middle of the scale, lacking a ceiling which would have been imposed if only the familiar knowledge items had been included.

The four media channels examined showed some differences in the kinds of information they were more likely to convey. Newspapers were effective in increasing the likelihood of learning across all four knowledge items. Network TV news might be effective in conveying the information closely related to dramatic war images and actions such as the name of Patriot missiles, but it was not at all effective in disseminating more abstract and non-action information such as the main content of the key UN resolution.[5] For the other two knowledge items, exposure to cable and PBS news showed significant positive effects. Both knowledge items did not become available information until the war broke out. In addition, one stands for an abstract notion of management system (reporter pooling) and most of our respondents did not learn about it or had forgotten it by the time they were interviewed. The other (Republican Guard) represents a concept alien to many people. Some in-depth discussion and repetition might be needed before each became a familiar knowledge item and remained in people's long term memory. Both cable news and MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour provided such coverage.

Several factors in the design, measurement, and statistical analysis might undermine the inferences made from the data. First, the two samples compared were drawn from different populations: one from the national population (adult residents living in the continental U.S.) and the other from central New York State. Many differences in the two populations could account for differences in news media exposure between the two samples. Comparing the two samples across a set of demographic variables revealed that the local sample was slightly better educated (14.10 *vs.* 12.95 years), younger (43.12 *vs.* 45.04 years), and more balanced in gender composition (55.5% females *vs.* 60.45% females). However, these differences were not that overwhelming as to account for all observed differences in news media exposures. Another important factor that might have accounted for at least part of the differences in proportion of people watching CNN is that the central New York State area may have a somewhat higher rate of cable penetration than the national average.

Second, the knowledge items only measured four bits of "isolated, detailed, or technical knowledge" (Robinson and Levy, 1986, p. 58) that might not be directly relevant to many people in understanding the Gulf conflict. In addition, these questions were framed in such a way that partial and incomplete answers were not coded and no opportunities were given to respondents to demonstrate their understanding of the conflict. From the evidence presented in this study, it would be erroneous to draw conclusions about the extent to which each news media channel helped or hampered audience members' understanding of news accounts about the war. It also would be too much of a theoretical leap beyond empirical evidence to conclude whether each news media channel helped or hampered the American democratic process.

Third, the logit regression models predicting the likelihood of getting a correct answer to a knowledge item were based upon strong assumptions about individuals' learning and information retrieval processes as well as about the nature of knowledge concerning the war. These models were based on the assumption that individuals, in responding to the knowledge items, made a choice between two discrete options (Maddala, 1983; Schmidt and Strauss, 1975), thus reinforcing the notion of "right" or "wrong" answers without considering partial or incomplete information. This assumption might have led to an underestimation of news media learning effects and the fitting of a wrong descriptive model to the process of learning about a major news events from mass media. Further research on the learning effects of news media exposure during the war must focus on the process of how individuals constructed their understanding of the Gulf conflict and how that process was related to their opinions and behaviors, supporting or opposing the war.

Endnotes

1. This is not to suggest that the media and the military always agree on what information and messages should be disseminated. While there always has been some friction between media and military in terms of reporting the nation's war activities (Braestrup, 1985), the Persian Gulf War was perhaps the most contentious yet. Ball-Rokeach (1985) and DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1982) discussed political system (government) goals and media system goals in the context of war, pointing out that an uneasy peace exists between two systems which are interdependent, which need to cooperate, yet which are often in conflict, particularly in this situation. For example, the political/military system wishes to create and/or maintain value consensus, to maintain order and obedience to the state, to control public opinion formation, and to organize and mobilize the citizenry in order to carry out essential activities. The media system, on the other hand, wishes to keep a watchdog eye on government and the military, to provide an emergency signalling system for the public, to present an objective and truthful account of news events, and to maintain its own power position vis-a-vis the political/military system. Major constraints faced by the mass media in war situations involve relative shortage of resources (*e.g.*, transport), intelligence (*e.g.*, war strategy), diminished public support (especially when the media try to perform their watchdog role, which involves being critical of political/military plans and activities), and dependence upon the decision makers who generate news involving conflict and drama. In the most recent war, it appears that the political system had the upper hand in terms of information control (Schanberg, 1991).

2. Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) discussed three general types of individual goals or motivations which affect individuals' media use behavior: (1) *understanding* oneself and others, thus permitting a definition of the situation; (2) *orientation* goals, involving meaningful and effective personal action and interaction with others (*e.g.*, coping behavior, crisis behavior, and self-defense); and, (3) *play/fantasy* goals, involving the desire to escape from or to reduce stress, problems, and tensions accumulated during daily living. Individuals' needs are grown out of meeting these goals.

3. For each dependent variable, the significance test of the news media exposure as a block can be performed by examining the difference in X^2 values between two equations in relation to the difference in degrees of freedom. The difference of the two Chi-Squared statistics also has a Chi-Squared distribution with a large sample (Maddala, 1983). The four tests are noted below:

Patriot missile model: X^2 for Eq. 2 - X^2 for Eq. 1 = 11.31, df = 4, $p < .05$.
UN Resolution model: X^2 for Eq. 2 - X^2 for Eq. 1 = 4.68, df = 4, n.s.
Reporter pooling model: X^2 for Eq. 2 - X^2 for Eq. 1 = 36.16, df = 4, $p < .001$.
Republican Guard model: X^2 for Eq. 2 - X^2 for Eq. 1 = 17.7, df = 4, $p < .001$.

4. Under the null model, each category should have an equal chance of selection: .50. A significant deviation upward or downward from .50 associated with an independent variable will be taken as an indication of a systematic effect of that variable. When the direction of such a deviation is determined, it is then possible to calculate how much of the 50% a deviation represents. For example, a probability of learning about the Patriot missiles associated with newspaper reading is .612. It deviates from .50 by .112 points, representing 22.4% of the total 50% of possible upward deviation.

5. Note that the regression coefficient associated with network TV news viewing in the "Patriot Missile" equation is not statistically significant. But it is in the positive direction, and corresponds to 6% increase in the likelihood of learning about the name of the Patriot missile. Correcting the attenuation resulting from measurement error might give us a statistically significant coefficient. More importantly, the question asked "the name of the missiles that the U.S. military used to shoot down Iraqi Scud missiles." It still deals with a bit of relatively abstract information. It is quite likely that heavy TV news viewers acquire the vivid images of Patriot missiles intercepting the Scud missiles. Newspapers would be much less likely to create such vivid images.

REFERENCES

Adams, R. (1981). Newspapers and television as news information media. *Journalism Quarterly, 58*, 627-629.

Ball-Rokeach, S. J. (1985). The origins of individual media-system dependency: a sociological framework. *Communication Research, 12*, 485-510.

Ball-Rokeach, S. J. and DeFleur, M. L. (1976). A dependency model of mass-media effects. *Communication Research, 3*, 3-21.

Ball-Rokeach, S. J., Rokeach, M., and Grube, J. W. (1984). *The great American values test: influencing behavior and belief through television.* New York: Free Press.

Becker, L. B. and Whitney, D. C. (1980). Effects of media dependencies: audience assessment of government. *Communication Research, 7*, 95-120.

Braestrup, P. (1985). Background paper. In Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on the Military and the Media. *Battle Lines* (pp. 15-178). New York: Priority Press Publications.

Berry C. (1983). Learning from television news: A critique of the research. *Journal of Broadcasting, 27*, 359-370.

Cohen, A. A., Adoni, H., & Drori, G. (1983). Adolescents' perceptions of social conflicts in television news and social reality. *Human Communication Research, 10*, 203-225.

DeFleur, M. L. & Ball-Rokeach, S. (1982). *Theories of Mass Communication (4th Ed.).* New York: Longman.

Dotan, J. and A. A. Cohen (1976). Mass media use in the family during the war and peace: Israel 1973-1974. *Communication Research, 3*, 393-402.

Ettema, J. S. and Kline, F. G. (1977). Deficits, differences, and ceilings: Contingent conditions for understanding the knowledge gap. *Communication Research, 4*, 179-202.

Gaziano, C. (1983). The knowledge gap hypothesis: An analytical review of effects. *Communication Research, 10*, 447-486.

Genova, B. K. and Greenberg, B. J. (1979). Interests in the news and the knowledge gap. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 43*, 79-91.

Goodman, W. (1991, May/June). Arnett. *Columbia Journalism Review*, pp. 29-31.

Gunter, B. (1987). *Poor Perception: Misunderstanding and Forgetting Broadcast News.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Hyman, H. H. Wright, C. and Reed, J. (1975). *The Enduring Effects of Education.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jhally, S., Lewis, J., & Morgan, M. (1991, February 12). *The Gulf War: A study of the media, public opinion & public knowledge.* (Available from Communication Research and Theory Network CRTNET 337 <CRTNET@PSUVM.BITNET> or from the authors, Department of Communication, University of Massachusetts, Amherst).

Kamen, J. (1991, March). CNN's breakthrough in Baghdad: Live by satellite (censored). *Washington Journalism Review*, pp. 26-29.

Maddala, G. S. (1983). *Limited-Dependent and Qualitative Variables in Econometrics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McLeod, J. M., Bybee, C. R., and Durall, J. A. (1979). Equivalence of informed political participation -- The 1976 presidential debates as a source of influence. *Communication Research*, 6, 463-487.

Miller, W. E. and National Election Studies (1990). *American National Election Study: 1989 Pilot Study (Computer file) 2nd. Release.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Center for Political Studies (Producer). Inter-University Censortium for Political and Social Research (Distributor).

Miller, M. M. and Reese, S. D. (1982). Media dependency as interaction: Effects of exposure and reliance on political activity and efficacy. *Communication Research*, 9, 227-248.

Miyo, K. (1983). The knowledge-gap hypothesis and media dependency. In R. N. Bostrom and B. H. Westley (eds.), *Communication Yearbook 7.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Neuman, W. R. (1986). *The Paradox of Mass Politics: Knowledge and Opinion in the American Electorate.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Robinson, J. P. and Levy, M. (1986). *The Main Source: Learning from Television News.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Schanberg, S. H. (1991). Censoring for political security. Bush's new kind of war: Smart bombs for Saddam Hussein and an iron muzzle for the American press. *Washington Journalism Review, 16*, 471-486.

Schmidt, P. and Strauss, R. P. (1975). The prediction of occupation using multiple logit models. *International Economic Review, 16*, 471-486.

Schuman, H. and Presser, S. (1981). *Questions and Answers in Attitude Surveys: Experiments on Question Form, Wording, and Context.* New York: Academic.

Smith, K. W. and Sasaki, M. S. (1979). Decreasing multicolinearity: A method for models with multiplicative functions. *Sociological Methods and Research, 8*, 35-56.

Stevens, G. and Cho, J. H. (1985). Socioeconomic indexes and the new 1980 Census Occupational Classification scheme. *Social Science Research, 14*, 142-168.

Tichenor, P. J., Donohue, G. A. and Olien, C. N. (1970). Mass media flow and differential growth of knowledge. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 34*, 159-170.

Wade, S. and Schramm, W. (1969). The mass media as sources of public affairs, science and health knowledge. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 33*, 197-209.

Zaller, J. and Price, V. (1990). *In One Ear and Out the Other: Learning and Forgetting the News.* Paper presented at the 1990 annual meeting of the Midwestern Political Science Association, Chicago, IL.

Zoglin, R. (1991, January 28). Live from the Middle East! *Time*, pp. 69-71.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of News Media Exposure Measures

	Local Sample		National Sample[1]		
Measures	mean	range	mean	range	t-value
Days per week reading a newspaper	4.970	0-7	4.567	0-7	2.76
Frequencies of reading:					
Gulf War news	7.132	0-10	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
other international news[2]	0.868	0-1	0.907	0-1	-2.13
editorials on the Gulf War	5.350	0-10	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
letters to the editors about the Gulf War	4.494	0-10	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
national news[2]	0.880	0-1	0.907	0-1	-1.52
local news[2]	0.903	0-1	0.967	0-1	-4.60
Watch TV news?	0.960	0-1	0.935	0-1	2.03
Frequencies of watching:					
network news[3]	6.960	0-10	3.378	0-7	10.65
local evening news[3]	6.585	0-10	4.272	0-7	1.89
CNN	0.720	0-1	0.374	0-1	13.00
C-SPAN	0.392	0-1	0.093	0-1	13.48
MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour	0.441	0-1	0.117	0-1	13.69
news interview shows	3.409	0-10	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Listen to radio news?	0.690	0-1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Frequencies of listening to:					
news briefs	0.633	0-1	0.768	0-1	-5.02
NPR news	0.522	0-1	0.273	0-1	9.44
news talk shows	0.445	0-1	0.283	0-1	6.06
Read a news magazine?	0.445	0-1	0.259	0-1	6.98

Notes:

1. The question wordings of the two surveys are not identical. See Appendix A for details.
2. The two surveys used different scales. While the local survey used a 0-10 point scale, the national survey used a 1-4 point scale. The variables were recoded into two categories: 0= never read; 1 = read.
3. The two surveys used different scales. While the local survey used a 0-10 point scale, the national survey used a 0-7 point scale. To reach a rough comparability in means and variance, for the local survey, each variable was multiplied by 7; for the national survey, each variable was multiplied by 10.

Table 2
The Most Used Source for Information On the Gulf War

Medium	% of the 1st Most Used Source	% of the 2nd Most Used Source
Newspapers	11.9	55.5
Television	79.4	14.6
Radio	5.9	17.0
Magazines	0.8	4.8
Family and friends	1.5	6.8
Other	0.5	1.4

Table 3
Predicting Levels of Knowledge about the Gulf War
(Hierarchical Regression Analysis)

			Additions[1]	
Predictors	Eq. 1	Eq. 2	beta	ΔR^2
Demographics				
Age	-.06	-.10*		
Gender (female)	-.28**	-.30**		
Education	.18**	.14**		
Occupation (SEI)	.15**	.15**		
Household Income	.12**	.08#		
R^2	25.8%			
News Media Exposure				
Newspaper		.18**		
Radio		-.01		
Network TV		.01		
Cable/PBS		.12**		
R^2		29.9%		
Components of Cable/PBS Factor				
CNN			.06	.30
C-SPAN			.08*	.60*
MacNeil/Lehrer			.09*	.65*
Interaction Terms[2]				
Newspaper x Education			-.06#	.37#
Radio x Education			.02	.05
Network TV x Education			-.07#	.43#
Cable/PBS x Education			-.04	.15
CNN x Education			-.07*	.53*
C-SPAN x Education			-.01	.00
MacNeil/Lehrer x Education			-.04	.14

Notes:

1. Each of the three components in the Cable/PBS factor was entered to the equation separately to replace the overall factor. Each interaction term was also entered to the equation separately with the corresponding main effect terms having entered the equation.
2. The interaction term was created by multiplying the two main effect terms with each being centered by following the Sasaki and Smith (1979) technique.

$p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$

Table 4
Predicting the Probability of Acquiring Specific Knowledge Items
(Logit Regression Models)[a]

	Patriot Missile			UN Resolution		
	Eq. 1	Eq. 2	p of Eq.2[b]	Eq. 1	Eq. 2	p of Eq.2[b]
Intercept	.975	2.001*	.882	-.764	-.440	.392
Demographics						
Age	-.018*	-.023*	.494	-.005	-.004	.499
Gender	-1.112*	-1.292*	.216	-.686*	-.693*	.333
Education	.114*	.019	.522	.139*	.121*	.530
Occupation (SEI)	.002*	.002*	.501	.002*	.002*	.501
Household Income	.168*	.129	.532	.037	.026	.506
News Media Exposure						
Newspaper		.457*	.612		.165	.541
Network TV		.120	.530		-.127	.468
Radio		-.031	.492		.013	.503
Cable/PBS		.067	.517		.028	.507
Pseudo R^2	15.04%	18.20%		9.09%	9.70%	
Chi Squared	101.39	112.70		70.23	74.91	
Degrees of freedom		5	9		5	9

a. The dependent variable is defined as $\log(p_1/(1-p_1))$. Pseudo-R^2 is defined as $1 - (L_1/L_0)$, where L_1 stands for the log likelihood of the theoretical model and L_0 stands for the null model with only the constant in the equation.

b. Each coefficient represents the amount of variation in the probability of choosing the correct answer (p_1) given one unit of change in the independent variable. The expected coefficient under the null model should be .50. The significant deviation from .50 represents the effect of the corresponding dependent variable.

* $p \leq .05$.

Table 4 (Cont.)
Predicting the Probability of Acquiring Specific Knowledge Items
(Logit Regression Models)[a]

	Reporter Pooling			Republican Guard		
	Eq. 1	Eq. 2	p of Eq.2[b]	Eq. 1	Eq. 2	p of Eq.2[b]
Intercept	-2.751*	-1.749*	.148	-.859	-.105	.474
Demographics						
Age	.001	-.004	.499	-.001	-.001	.499
Gender	-.931*	-1.121*	.246	-1.213*	-1.332*	.209
Education	.099*	.070	.517	.127*	.107*	.527
Occupation (SEI)	.001	.001	.500	.001	.001	.500
Household Income	.147*	.076	.519	.105*	.007	.517
News Media Exposure						
Newspaper		.358*	.589		.347*	.585
Network TV		.023	.506		.037	.509
Radio		-.127	.497		-.024	.494
Cable/PBS		.640*	.655		.214*	.553
Pseudo R^2	10.53%	16.86%		12.60%	14.71%	
Chi Squared	60.17	96.33		105.82	123.52	
Degrees of freedom		5	9		5	9

a. The dependent variable is defined as $\log(p_1/(1-p_1))$. Pseudo-R^2 is defined as $1 - (L_1/L_0)$, where L_1 stands for the log likelihood of the theoretical model and L_0 stands for the null model with only the constant in the equation.

b. Each coefficient represents the amount of variation in the probability of choosing the correct answer (p_1) given one unit of change in the independent variable. The expected coefficient under the null model should be .50. The significant deviation from .50 represents the effect of the corresponding dependent variable.

* $p \leq .05$.

Appendix A
Question Wordings of the News Media Exposure

	Local Sample		National Sample
1.	How many days a week do you read a newspaper?	F2.	How many days in the past week/in a typical week did/do you read a daily newspaper?
3.	Next, I'd like to know how often you read certain types of news in the newspaper(s). Please use a ten-point scale, where one means rarely and ten means very often. You may use any number between one and ten. If you don't read this type of news, just tell me. How often do you read:	H4.	Now think about different kinds of stories in the newspaper. For each, just tell me if you read them frequently, sometimes, rarely, or never.
a.	Gulf War news		
b.	Other international news	H4d.	(How often do you read stories about) international and world affairs?
c.	Editorials on the Gulf war		
d.	Letters to the editors about the Gulf War		
e.	National news	H4c.	(How often do you read stories about) national affairs and politics?
f.	Local news	H4a.	How often do you read stories about things happening in your local community?
4.	Do you watch TV news?	F1.	How many days in the past week/in a typical week did/do you watch the news on TV?

5.	Now, I'd like to know how often you watch certain TV news programming. We'll be using the ten-point scale again, where one means rarely and ten means very often, if you don't watch a particular type of TV news program which I will read you, just tell me. How often do you watch:	H1.	Please tell me how often you watch each of the following types of shows on TV.
a.	Network evening news	H1d.	How many days in the past week/ days in a typical week did/do you watch national news broadcasts, like the ABC News with Peter Jenings, CBS with Dan Rather, or NBC with Tom Browkow?
b.	Local evening news	H1c.	How many days in the past week/ days in a typical week did/do you watch local news broadcasts, that is programs that mainly cover news that occurs in your state and local community?
c.	CNN	A3a.	How many days in a typical week do you watch CNN?
d.	C-SPAN	A9a.	How many days in a typical week do you watch C-SPAN?
e.	MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour on PBS	A8a.	How many days in a typical week do you watch MacNeil-Lehrer?
f.	News Interview shows		
6.	Do you listen to radio news?		
7.	Now, I'd like to know how often you listen to each of the following radio news programs. We'll be using the ten point scale again, where one means rarely and ten means very often. If you don't listen to this type of radio news, just tell me. How often do you listen to:		

a.	Radio news briefs	H2b.	How many days in the past week/ days in a typical week did/do you listen to short news summaries, usually five minutes or so, that are broadcast in between music or other regular programs?
b.	National Public Radio news	A2a.	How many days in a typical week do you listen to NPR?
c.	News talk shows	H2a.	How many days in the past week/ days in a typical week did/do you listen to talk radio programs, where people call in to talk about public issues?
8.	On this same ten point scale, how often do you read weekly news magazines? Again, if you don't read any, just tell me.	H3.	(In the past week did) (Do) you read a national news magazine, such as Newsweek or Time (in a typical week)?

Appendix B
Factor Analysis of News Media Exposure Measures
(Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation)[1]

	Newspaper	Radio	Network TV	Other TV
National news	.839			
International news	.829			
News about the Gulf War	.806			
Local news	.772			
Newspaper reading days	.727			
Letters to editors	.682			
NPR news		.850		
Radio news briefs		.786		
Radio news talk shows		.750		
TV local news			.876	
Network evening news			.846	
News interview shows			.494	.488
C-SPAN				.785
CNN news				.690
MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour				.599
Eigenvalue	4.766	1.980	1.810	1.463
Percent of variance	29.8	12.4	11.3	9.1

Note:
1. The loadings below .30 are not shown for simplicity of the table.
n = 607

THE AGENDA-SETTING EFFECTS OF TERRORISM

John W. Williams, Graduate Student, School of Journalism, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901

INTRODUCTION

In a recently published piece, Farnen (1990) proposes a schematic diagram of the essential elements in the systemic relationship between terrorism and the media. The scheme reveals six key elements in the interactive relationship: terrorist groups, the media, "terrorism," public opinion, state action and public policies, and the encompassing political environment. Farnen defines terrorism as the "larger-than-life product of media treatment. The result is a concept, affect, and throughput, which bears little resemblence to the much smaller, insignificant group which initiated the threatened violence" (p. 121). He suggests that terrorism is the magnified or enlarged output of mass media coverage of terrorist groups. The public processes "terrorism" through a two-step sequence of filters (conceptual frames of reference) and public opinion. According to Farnen, state action and public policy rely in part on public opinion for guidance.

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon (Fleming, 1980, Laqueur and Alexander, 1987). With the advent of modern communication, especially television and the satellite relay, terrorism seems more immediate and more threatening (Hacker, 1980, Laqueur, 1977, 1978, 1987). Likewise, the concept of terror as communication is not new, at least not to terrorists and students of terrorism. Revolutionary acts have been referred to as "theater" (Brustein, 1970, 1971, Weiman, 1983), "propaganda of the deed" (Fleming, 1980, Lasswell, 1973, Watson, 1975), "scenario reality" (Smith, 1974), and "war of nerves" (Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism, 1976). The relationship between the terrorist and the media has been called an "intrinsic mutual dependency" (Hacker, 1980) and "symbiotic" (Damm, 1982).

Mohsen (1987) has analyzed terrorism as "an essentially a communicative act." He defined terrorist acts as messages, with both verbal and non-verbal components. The acts/messages are deliberately aimed at specific audiences, intentionally manipulating media channels, to elicit desired behavioral responses. The primary data for Mohsen's study came from four in-depth interviews with persons engaged in revolutionary violence.

Carlos Marighella, known as the father of urban guerrilla warfare, recognized the synergistic relationship between terrorism and media (Miller and Russell, 1979, Williams, 1989). A Brazilian terrorist gunned down in a police ambush in Sao Paulo in 1969, Marighella authored the *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*. One of Marighella's key themes, subsequently adopted by most terrorist movements (Alexander, 1978), was the utilization and manipulation of the media. Alexander (1978, p. 333) writes, "Terrorism, like advertising, increases the effectiveness of its messages by focusing on spectacular events and by keeping particular issues alive through repetition." Laqueur (1976, p. 104) states, "The media are the terrorist's best friend. The terrorist's act by itself is nothing; publicity is all." Bassiouni (1983, p. 181) lists some of the reasons for the manipulation of the media: to demonstrate the vulnerability and impotence of the government; to attract broader public sympathy; to cause polarization and radicalization among the public; to goad the government into repressive action; and to present violent acts as heroic. There is evidence that terrorists are choreographing dramatic events to maximize their propaganda and media potential (Damm, 1982).

Marighella understood this. Laqueur (1977, p. 183) writes that the Brazilian terrorist "had an excellent flair for publicity and good connections with the media and their exploits were extensively reported all over the globe." Marighella wrote (1970):

> The coordination of urban guerrilla action, including each armed action, is the principle way of making armed propaganda. These actions, carried out with specific and determined objectives, inevitably become propaganda material for the mass communications system. Bank assaults, ambushes, desertions and diverting of arms, the rescue of prisoners, executions, kidnappings, sabotage, terrorism, and the war of nerves, are all cases in point. The war of nerves or psychological war is an aggressive technique, based on the direct or indirect use of mass means of communciation and news transmitted orally in order to demoralize the government.

At the interpersonal level, the success or failure of terrorism can be conceptualized as the ability of the terrorist to produce an intended effect on his victim. The effect is easy to operationalize, usually as the death or maiming of a victim or destruction of property. If the sole goal of the terrorist is the death or maiming of a victim or destruction of property, as in the assassination attempts by the Secret Army Organization in France on French President Charles de Gaulle, the immediate victim is the terrorist's only audience.

However, if the seizure, maiming, killing or destruction of property is a tactic for attracting the attention of a larger audience and for attempting to produce some effect on that larger audience, the immediate target of the violence only a secondary victim. The secondary victim or target is either randomly chosen or intentionally selected for symbolic or representational value. The Italian Red Brigade randomly shot journalists in the kneecap (a very painful and irreversable wound) with the intended effect of frightening all journalists, fearful that each might be the next, arbitrary target. The Red Brigade also kidnapped and brutally murdered former prime minister Aldo Moro, one of modern Italy's most respected leaders. Their purpose was not to remove Moro from power (as a primary victim) but to demonstrate to the Italian people (as their intended audience), through the brutal slaying of a popular person (a secondary victim), the utter powerlessness of the Italian authorities to prevent terrorism and protect the democratic state (Wagner-Pacifici, 1983). Success in achieving the desired effect on the secondary victim does not mean success in achieving the desired effect on the intended or primary audience. The Italian republic did not fall. In fact, shortly afterwards Italian and American units were able to rescue American Brig. General James Dozier from his Red Brigade captors.

The success or failure of terrorism as mass communication can be conceptualized as the ability of the terrorist to produce an intended effect on the ultimate audience. The intended effect may be as varied as the collapse of Western democratic institutions as sought by nihilistic terrorists or changes in foreign policy positions as sought by ethnic-based terrorists (Desloover, 1986, Wolf, 1975). Or, it may a change in the public's attitudes or the public's agenda, as a technique for attempting to influence the making of public policy.

Agenda-setting research holds that the mass media have an effect on public opinion by the mere fact that the media pays attention to some issues and not to other issues, or more attention to some issues and less attention to other issues. By consuming the media, the public learns what the issues are and how the issues rate in importance, a concept known as salience. Theoretically, those issues which get more media attention will grow in public familiarity and perceived importance over a period of time, and those isses which get less media attention will decline in public familiarity and perceived importance. McCombs and Shaw (1976) wrote:

> Audiences not only learn about public issues and other matters through the media, they also learn how much importance to attach to an issue or topic from the emphasis the mass media place upon it. For example, in reflecting what candidates are saying during a campaign, the mass media apparently determine the important issues. In other words, the mass media set the "agenda" of the campaign. This ability to affect cognitive change among individuals is one of the most important aspects of the power of mass communication.

Identification of the public agenda, in the form of public opinion, and changes in the public agenda, in the form of changes in public opinion, can be obtained through the regular periodic polls conducted by national polling organizations, such as Gallup, Harris and Roper. These polls have several short-comings, due primarily to their nature as post-hoc measuring tools. First, the polls were not necessarily designed to measure public opinion on the specific problem of terrorism and agenda of terrorists. Second, the polls are not necessarily consistent in terms of what and how they measure public opinion. Third, the polls were not conducted with a temporal relationship to terrorist acts or messages in mind. Nevertheless, polls have been used effectively, especially when following an issue over time (McCombs, 1981, Smith, 1980, Winter and Eyal, 1981).

Agenda-setting research has raised a number of questions (McQuail and Windahl, 1981, Roberts and Maccoby, 1985). Initial studies suggested that agenda-setting was a conscious, intentional and systematic function of the media aimed at directing the public agenda (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, Shaw and McCombs, 1977). Subsequent research has questioned who actually sets the agenda -- the media, the public and their needs (Shaw, 1979), or institutional elites (Lang and Lang, 1983)? The media may not be the agenda-setter but merely a conduit or conveyor belt for agenda established by some "agenda-builder."

Agenda-setting assumes that the message was transmitted or published to the intended or ultimate audience. In almost all instances, this means that the action of the terrorist is relayed to the larger audience through the mass media. As Farnen's model suggests, as the message of terrorism is processed by and through the media, it can be changed. For example, it must pass through the hands of gatekeepers (White, 1950). Given the different motivations of the media gatekeepers, there is no guarantee that the terrorist act will be reported the way the terrorist intends (see Farnen's example of Winston-Salem, p. 110) or even reported at all. However, terrorism meets the most important criteria for newsworthiness: conflict, proximity and timeliness (Graber, 1980, pp. 60-68).

Some authors suggest that the media, by its coverage of terrorism, contributes to (Catton, 1978, Halloran, 1978, Martin, 1985, Midlarshy, Crenshaw and Yoshida, 1980) or causes terrorism (O'Sullivan, 1986, Redlick, 1979). "If the media were not there to report terrorist acts and to explain their political and social significance ... terrorism as such would cease to exist" (O'Sullivan, 1986). Picard (1988) calls these assertions "contagion literature." He challenges the media-as-cause viewpoint as politically motivated rather than empirically grounded or based on incomplete or inaccurate data (also see, Heyman and Mickolus, 1980). "As one reviews the literature it becomes shockingly clear that not a single study based on accepted social science research methods has established a cause-effect relationship between media coverage and the spread of terrorism." (Picard, 1988, p. 1) The studies, as summarized by Picard, "do not provide much support for the view that media are crucial elements as contagion." As an alternative Picard and others (Task Force, 1976) have urged more and better coverage of terrorism by the media.

> The media can be most influential in setting the tone for a proper response by the civil authorities to disorders, acts of terrorism, and political violence. It can provide an outlet for the expression of legitimate public concern on important issues so as to act as a safety value, and it can bring pressure to bear in response to public sentiment in an effective manner to redress grievances and to change official policies. (Task Force, 1976, p. 65)

RESEARCH QUESTION

The writings of Marighella, Farnen, Picard and others raise but do not answer a fundamental question, which directed this research: does terrorism, even if filtered by the mass media, affect the public agenda and how? Scholars have certainly looked at how the media has covered terrorism (television -- Wurth-Hough, 1983; newspapers -- Picard and Adams, 1987). Some have examined public opinion on the problems of terrorism (DeBoer, 1979). However, no one has attempted to connect the two.

MacKuen and Coombs (1981) found that stories with a high degree of conflict exert a stronger influence on setting the public agenda. Terrorism certainly has conflict. Yagade and Dozier (1990) found that concrete issues exert a stronger influence on the public's agenda than do abstract issues. They argued that the public is better able to grasp and understand the significance of concrete issues as problems. Terrorism certainly is concrete, with pictures of bodies and physical destruction. Finally, issues that are highly relevant to the public will have exert stronger influence on the public's agenda (Weaver, 1977).

METHODOLOGY

The data for this study was derived from a larger study conducted at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale to explore the agenda-setting effects of international news coverage.[1]

At least once every year, sometimes as often as four times in a year, the Gallup organization conducts its "Most Important Problem" poll (see, for example, Funkhauser, 1973). The poll asks the question "What is the number one problem facing our country today?" This study examined all 41 Gallup MIP polls between from 1975 to 1989. These years were selected in order to avoid the influence of the Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars, perhaps the two most seminal events in American foreign affairs in the last three decades. Of particular interest was the percentage of respondents naming topics of international interest as the most important problem. Among their answers were international problems, threat of war and terrorism. Because the MIP question is open-ended, the pollsters condensed the responses into general categories. Other than being able to identify responses related to international issues, there is no assurance that the categories were consistently condensed in each MIP. Therefore, all international responses were combined into a single response category: "international problems." Responses citing the combined category of international problems varied from a low of 4% to a high of 47%.

---

[1] The study was directed by Dr. Wayne Wanta, School of Journalism.

Four media were selected for analysis -- the New York Times (cited by many as America's "newspaper of record") and the nightly national news broadcasts of the three major television networks -- ABC, CBS and NBC. Researchers have suggested that agenda-setting effects have a time-lag of two to four weeks (Zucker, 1978) or four to six weeks (Winter and Eyal, 1981). Therefore, the international news stories on the front page of the New York Times (Funkhauser, 1973, Winter and Eyal, 1981) and on the evening news, based on the indexes of the broadcasts maintained by the Vanderbilt Archives News Abstracts, were studied for the four weeks before each MIP poll.

Each story was coded according its predominant theme or subject matter into one of 15 categories, including "terrorism involving the United States" and "terrorism not involving the United States." The former category included stories of terrorism conducted by foreign terrorists in the United States and terrorism abroad targetted at Americans or in which Americans were involved. Purely domestic terrorism -- Americans terrorizing Americans in the United States -- was not included. Terrorism was defined by whether the news piece or article referred to it as terrorism. The two terrorism categories were specifically designated with this study in mind. More than 25,000 items from the four media were coded.2 Approximately 10% of the data was double-coded for an intercoder reliability of .91.

Pearson correlations were computed comparing the number of stories in each category for each medium with the percentage of respondents who said international problems was the number one problem facing our country today. Statistically significant correlations will suggest whether news about terrorism produces an agenda-setting effect on the public.

RESULTS

Table 1 lists the mean number of stories that the four news media ran in the four weeks before each MIP Gallup poll. Three categories of news dominated the amount of all stories on television -- international politics involving the United States, non-U.S. trade and economic matters, and conflicts not involving the United States (ABC 58.25%, CBS 59.44%, NBC 58.39%). These three topics, plus news of military and nuclear arms, dominated the New York Times (58.59%). The two categories of terrorism

---

2. I am grateful to my fellow graduate student, Yu-wei Hu, who assisted by coding the television news stories.

combined averaged only 12.69% of the networks' coverage (ABC 13.77%, CBS 11.97%, NBC 12.33%). The newspaper's coverage was less than half this amount (6.04%). Nevertheless, of the 15 categories of international news coverage by the four media, the category of "terrorism involving the United States" had a significant correlation to public concern over international problems. As Table 2 summarizes, coverage of terrorism involving the United States correlated significantly with public concern for international problems for two of the three networks (ABC .29, $p < .05$; NBC .31, $p < .05$). The coverage of the New York Times was not significant at all. Although not significant, the results for terrorism-not-involving-the-United-States revealed either extremely low correlation (.04 for the New York Times) or slight, but consistently negative correlation for the three networks (ABC -.22; CBS -.18; NBC -.12). These correlations, regardless of significance, do not imply causation.

DISCUSSION

In an attempt to identify the agenda-setting effects of terrorism, this study compared 15 categories of international news coverage by four media with the level of public concern with international problems as recored by the Gallup most important problem polls. Several categories, including stories of terrorism involving the United States, apparently have stronger agenda-setting influence on the public than do other categories. However, this was only true for television news.

This finding is consistent with the conclusion of MacKuen and Coombs (1981) who argue that stories with high levels of conflict will produce the strongest agenda-setting effects. The high level of violence and conflict inherent in terrorism and, hence, in stories about terrorism, give salience cues to the public that international problems was an important issue.

The finding is also consistent with the conclusion of Yagade and Dozier (1990) who argue that stories involving concrete issues will produce stronger agenda-setting effects than will stories involving abstract issues. Terrorism is a concrete issue for the public, particularly when they witness the physical and human results of terrorism. Terrorism, especially through the use of violence, is able to turn abstract issues into concrete events. Even though the chances of becoming the victim of a terorrist attack are said to less than being struck by lightning, we tend to fear that we could have been in the Rome airport or on Pan Am 103 (see, for example, Mickolus, 1980).

Furthermore, as noted by Weaver (1977), the issue must be relevant to the public in order to have an agenda-setting effect. Terrorism against Americans or within the United States is highly relevant to the American public, especially when one of the techniques of terrorism is to instill the fear of becoming a victim throughout the public. The absence of an agenda-setting effect from news of terrorism not involving America or Americans tends to reinforce this point. The negative correlation should be the focus of future research.

Finally, the difference between the television news correlations and the newspaper correlation reinforces the assertions of many scholars about the power of television in the coverage of terrorism (Adams, 1982, Bell, 1978, Schlesinger, Murdock and Elliot, 1983, Weiman, 1987). Further research is needed here because this difference could be explained by other factors, such as differences in the character of the audiences.

It appears that terrorism is successful in temporarily influencing public behavior. At least in the minds of the audience, terrorism results in the actual modification of their behavior. This can be documented in a number of ways: the number of airline bookings cancelled immediately after attacks on the Vienna and Rome airports and the bombing of Pan Am flight 103; the number of airline bookings cancelled or rerouted around Athens, Greece, after each hijacking originating at Athens; and the number of Mediterranean cruise ship bookings cancelled (or empty cabins) after the Achille Lauro hijacking.

It also appears that news reports of terrorism are successful in influencing, at least temporarily, the public's agenda. Because of the nature of terrorism and its appeal to the news media (Gerbner, 1988), as well as the purposive use of terror by terrorists in order to obtain attention (Bell, 1978, Weiman, 1987), terrorism attracts news coverage. This coverage, however, may be temporary, often displaced by someone else's terrorism or news of other conflictual, concrete and relevant events. Terrorism may temporarily raise itself on the media's "attention scale" until subsequent events displace them. Although many assume that the political agenda of a government, particularly in a democracy, may be altered by a shift in the consensus of the body politic (Clark and Fredin, 1978, Farnen, 1990, Wurth-Hough, 1983), the influence of terrorism in shaping the political agenda has yet to be demonstrated.

The results of this study suggest several avenues for future research: the negative correlation over terrorism-not-involving-the United States; the differences between television and newspaper coverage; and the relationship of media coverage and public opinion to incidents of terrorism and government counter-terrorism policies.

Table 1. Mean number of stories run by four news media in the four weeks before the Gallup organization's most important problem polls, 1975-1989.

Category	ABC	CBS	NBC	NYT
U.S.-International conflicts	6.12	6.78	7.12	8.17
Non-U.S. conflicts	18.98	20.05	19.42	19.29
Military/nuclear arms	7.61	6.24	7.00	15.32
Terrorism involving U.S.	11.81	9.95	10.49	3.68
Terrorism not involving U.S.	10.90	10.29	10.73	2.83
Crime/drugs	3.27	3.63	3.76	2.22
Gov't corruption	1.81	1.32	1.56	1.22
Human rights	3.32	2.93	2.88	5.56
Accidents/disasters	9.02	9.88	9.07	2.06
U.S.-International trade/economy	1.68	2.37	2.46	3.05
Non-U.S. trade	2.71	3.17	3.12	4.32
Political involving U.S.	34.66	33.24	36.49	10.10
Political not involving U.S.	42.44	47.17	44.59	18.46
Human interest	3.10	3.05	3.95	5.98
Miscellaneous	7.54	8.95	9.49	4.76
All categories	164.95	169.02	172.12	107.81

Table 2. Pearson correlations of public concern with international problems as the country's most important problem and coverage of international news by four news media, 1975-1989.

Category	ABC	CBS	NBC	NYT
U.S.-International conflicts	.54***	.59***	.61***	.49***
Non-U.S. conflicts	-.09	-.05	-.01	.35*
Military/nuclear arms	.19	.17	.31*	.34*
Terrorism involving U.S.	.29*	.21	.31*	.04
Terrorism not involving U.S.	-.22	-.18	-.12	.04
Crime/drugs	.11	.29*	.26*	.28*
Gov't corruption	-.11	-.17	-.03	-.13
Human rights	.15	.02	.32*	.21
Accidents/disasters	-.06	-.10	.02	.18
U.S.-International trade/economy	-.06	.17	.02	-.05
Non-U.S. trade	-.33*	-.39**	-.14	-.07
Political involving U.S.	-.09	-.19	-.15	-.27*
Political not involving U.S.	-.33*	-.31*	-.18	-.25
Human interest	-.02	.12	-.02	.00
Miscellaneous	-.02	.01	.05	-.21
All categories	.04	.01	.23	.54***

REFERENCES

Alexander, Y. (1978). Terrorism, the media, and the police. In Journal of International Affairs, 32(1), 1978. Reprinted in R.H. Kupperman, & D.M. Trent (Eds.) (1979), Terrorism: Threat, reality, response (pp. 331-348), Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press.

Adams, W.C. (ed.) (1982). Television coverage of international news, Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Bassiouni, M.C. (1983) Problems in media coverage of nonstate-sponsored terror-violence incidents. In L.Z. Freedman & Y. Alexander (eds.), Perspectives on terrorism, Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc.

Bell, J.B. (1978, May-June). Terrorist scripts and live-action spectaculars. Columbia Journalism Review, 47-50.

Brustein, R. (1970). Revolution and social change: Revolution as theatre." Current, 118, 3-9.

Brustein, R. (1971). Revolution as theatre: Notes in the new radical style, New York: Liveright.

Catton, W.R. (1978). Militants and the media: Partners in terrorism? Indiana Law Journal 53(4), 703-715.

Clark, P. and Fredin, E. (1978). Newspapers, tv and political reasoning. Public Opinion Quarterly, 42(2), 143-160.

Damm, C. (1982). Media and terrorism. Journal of Security Administration, 5(1), 7-18.

DeBoer, C. (1979). The polls: Terrorism and hijacking. Public Opinion Quarterly, 43, 410-418.

Desloover, M. (1986). Terrorism vs democracy: A study in the effect terrorism has on the political systems it attempts to influence. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Louisville, KY.

Farnen, R.F. (1990). Terrorism and the mass media: A systemic analysis of a symbiotic process. Terrorism, 13(2), 99-143.

Fleming, M. (1980). Propaganda by the deed: Terrorism and anarchist theory in late nineteenth-century Europe. Terrorism, 4(1), 1-23.

Funkhouser, G.R. (1973). The issues of the sixties: An exploratory study in the dynamics of public opinion. Public Opinion Quarterly, 37(1), 62-75.

Gallup, G.H. (periodic). The Gallup Poll, New York: Random House.

Gans, H.J. (1979). Deciding what's news: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time, New York: Pantheon.

Gerbner, G. (1988). Symbolic functions of violence and terror. Terrorism and the News Media Research Project, Emerson College, Boston.

Hacker, F. (1980). Terror and terrorism: Modern growth industry and mass entertainment. Terrorism, 4(2), 143-159.

Halloran, J.D. (1978). Mass communication: Symptom or cause of violence? International Social Science Journal, 30(4), 816-833.

Heyman, E. and Mickolus, E. (1980, June). Observations on "why violence spreads." International Studies Quarterly, 299-305.

Lang, K. and Lang, G.E. (1983). The battle for public opinion: The president, the press, and the polls during Watergate, New York: Columbia University Press.

Laqueur, W. (1987). The age of terrorism, Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

Laqueur, W. (1977). Terrorism: A study of national and international political violence, Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

Laqueur, W. (1978, January). Terrorism makes a tremendous noise. Across the Board, 57-67.

Laqueur, W. (1976, March). The futility of terrorism. Harper's, 104.

Laqueur, W. and Alexander, Y. (1987). The terrorism reader (rev. ed.), New York: NAL Penguin Books.

Lasswell, H.D. (1973). World revolutionary propaganda, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

MacKuen, M.B. and Coombs, S.L. (1981). More than news: Media power in public affairs, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Marighella, C. (1970, January-Feburary). Minimanual of the urban guerrilla. Tricontinental Bimonthly (Havana, Cuba), 16-56.

Martin, L.J. (1985). The media's role in international terrorism. Terrorism, 8(2), 127-146.

McCLeod, J.M., Becker, L.B. and Byrnes, J.E. (1974). Another look at the agenda-setting function of the press. Communication Research, 1(2), 131-166.

McCombs, M.E. (1981). The agenda-setting approach. In D.D. Nimmo and K.R. Sanders (eds.), Handbook of Political Communication, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 121-140.

McCombs, M.E. and Shaw, D.L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. Public Opinion Quarterly, 36(2), 176-187.

McCombs, M.E. and Shaw, D.L. (1976). Structuring the "unseen environment." Journal of Communication, 18-22.

McQuail, D. and Windahl, S. (1981). Communication models for the study of mass communication, New York: Longman.

Mickolus, E.F. (1980). Transnational terrorism: A chronology of events, 1968-1979, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Midlarsky, M.I., Crenshaw, M. and Yoshida, F (1980, June). Why violence spreads: The contagion of international terrorism. International Studies Quarterly, 276-298.

Miller, B.H. & Russell, C.A. (1979). The evolution of revolutionary warfare: From Mao to Marighella and Meinhof. In R.H. Kupperman & D.M. Trent (Eds.), Terrorism: Threat, reality, response (pp. 185-199), Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press.

Mohsen, R.A. (1987). The communicative, persuasive, and agitational aspects of revolutionary "terrorism". Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Bowling Green State University.

Oots, K.L. & Wiegle, T.C. (1985). Terrorist and victim: Psychiatric and physiological approaches from a social science perspective. Terrorism, 8(1), 1-32.

O'Sullivan, J. (1986). Media publicity causes terrorism. In B. Netanyahu (Ed.), Terrorism: How the west can win, Washington, D.C.: Jonathan Institute.

Picard, R. (1988). News coverage as the contagion of terrorism: Dangerous charges backed by dubious science. Terrorism and the News Media Research Project, Emerson College, Boston. Reprinted from Political Communication and Persuasion, 3(1), 35-40.

Picard, R.G. and Adams, P.D. (1987). Characterizations of acts and perpetrators of political violence in three elite U.S. daily newspapers. Political Communication and Persuasion, 4(1), 1-9.

Redlick, A.S. (1979). The transnational flow of information as a cause of terrorism. In Y. Alexander, D. Carlton, & P. Wilkinson (Eds.), Terrorism: Theory and practice (pp. 73-95), Boulder, CO: Westview.

Roberts, D.F. and Maccoby, N. (1985). Effects of mass communication. In G. Lindsay & E. Aronson (Eds.), Handbook of social psychology (3rd. ed.), New York: Random House.

Schlesinger, P., Murdock, G., and Elliot, P. (1983). "Televising terrorism": Political violence in popular culture, London: Comedia.

Schmid, A.P. and de Graaf, J. (1982). Violence as communication: Insurgent terrorism and the Western news media, London: Sage.

Shaw, D.L. and McCombs, M.E. (1977). The emergence of American political issues: The agenda-setting function of the press, St. Paul, MN: West.

Shaw, E.F. (1979). Agenda-setting and mass communication theory. Gazette, 25(2), 96-105.

Smith, D. (1974, March 30). Scenario reality: A new brand of terrorism. The Nation, 392-394.

Smith, T.W. (1980). American's most important problem: A trend analysis, 1946-1976. Public Opinion Quarterly, 44(2), 164-180.

Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism (1976). Disorders and terrorism, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

Wagner-Pacifici, R.E. (1983). The Moro morality play: A case of symbolic politics. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania (subsequently published).

Watson, F.M. (1975). Terrorist propaganda, Gaithersburg, MD: International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Weaver, D.H. (1977). Political issues and voter need for orientation. In D.L. Shaw and M.E. McCombs (eds.), The emergence of American political issues: The agenda-setting function of the press, St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co., 107-119.

Weiman, G. (1983). The theater of terror: Effects of press coverage. Journal of Communication, 33(1), 38-45.

Weiman, G. (1987). Media events: The case of international terrorism. Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 31, 21-35.

White, D.M. (1950). The 'gate keeper': A case study in the selection of news. Journalism Quarterly, 27, 383-390.

Williams, J.W. (1989). Carlos Marighela: The father of urban guerrilla warfare. Terrorism, 12(1), 1-20.

Winter, J.P and Eyal, C. (1981). Agenda-setting for the civil rights issue. Public Opinion Quarterly, 45(3), 376-383.

Wolf, J.B. (1975, April). Terrorist manipulation of the democratic process. Police Journal, 48(2), 102-112.

Wurth-Hough, S. (1983). Network news coverage of terrorism: The early years. Terrorism, 6(3), 403-421.

Yagada, A. and Dozier, D.M. (1990). The media agenda-setting effect of concrete versus abstract issues. Journalism Quarterly, 67(1), 3-10.

Zucker, H.G. (1978). The variable nature of news media influence. In B.D. Ruben (ed.), Communication Yearbook No. 2, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 225-245.